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ABSTRACT

This document, one of a series for child caregivers working in military care centers, discusses ways of constructing appropriate environments for toddlers. Sections of part 1 focus on recognizing the influence of environments on children's feelings and behavior, coordinating the arrangement of space with the physical and psychological characteristics of toddlers, and using environmental features affecting children's moods and imagination. Sections of part 2 discuss meeting the individual and special needs of toddlers, encouraging development through play, and using materials in activities with toddlers. Checklists for assessing the center environment accompany each of the discussions in parts 1 and 2. Also included is a developmental checklist for assessing toddlers' skills. The final section of the module provides suggestions for acquiring resources to support caregiving activities. (RH)

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Creating Environments For Toddlers

Child Environment Series

Military Child Care Project

April 1982

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MANPOWER, RESERVE AFFAIRS, AND LOGISTICS

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01 APR 1982

FOREWORD

This series of manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations is issued under the authority of DoD Instruction 6060.1, "Training Manuals for Child Care Givers on DoD Installations," January 19, 1981. Its purpose is to provide child care givers with training materials that include the latest techniques and procedures for the safe care and guiding development of children entrusted to their care.

This series of manuals, DoD 6060.1-M-1 through DoD 6060.1-M-17, was developed under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services by the Department of Army, in cooperation with the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

The provisions of this series of manuals apply to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, and the Defense Agencies (hereafter referred to as DoD Components) whose heads shall ensure that the manuals are distributed or otherwise made available to all child care givers on DoD installations and that these materials are used in regional and inter-Service workshops, seminars, and training sessions.

This series of manuals is effective immediately.

Send recommended changes to the manuals through channels to:

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R. Dean Tice
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Deputy Assistant Secretary

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Creating Environments For Toddlers

(25-36 Months)

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INTRODUCTION

en-vi-ron-ment *the total of those things which surround; surroundings, including both people and things.*

This book is about creating environments for toddlers - children 25 through 36 months of age. What children see, hear, smell, taste and touch affects how they feel and behave. Children watch and learn from everything that surrounds them. The people and things around them shape their experiences.

This book is divided into two parts, with selected resources at the end. PART ONE outlines some ways to organize and arrange physical space. PART TWO suggests some good ways to use the people and things in that space. The environments we describe are designed to help children be successful and grow towards independence. Feelings of success grow out of finding toys and experiences that are fun and provide some challenge. Independence comes as children learn and practice new skills through the play they choose and activities they do.

There is a lot of information in this book. Nearly every page talks about a different and important idea. We suggest that you read and do the checklist at the end of just one section at a time. Once you have read the whole book, keep it handy so you can refer to it from time to time.

We do not pretend to provide all the answers. All we can do is present a beginning or guide. It is up to each caregiver to use and add to this basic information in individual and creative ways. Good child care programs happen when caregivers know and understand their toddlers and have fun with them. So watch the children in your care. Think about how they react to their surroundings. Then you can evaluate, plan and manage environments especially for toddlers.

PLANNING YOUR CENTER'S PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

PART ONE

IN PART ONE you will discover:

- how environments affect feelings and behavior
- good ways to organize indoor and outdoor play areas to offer children a variety of experiences
- checklists for rating your center's environment

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS

Everything outside of your body is a part of your *environment*. This includes people, space, climate, colors, textures, tastes and sounds. We learn early in life to give meaning to the things around us. We look for signals or clues to tell us where we are or how we are to behave. Different types of space, kinds of clothing and behaviors give us different messages. Studies and experiments have shown that environments can affect people in a variety of ways. The important point to remember is that every environment does affect how people feel and behave.

Here are some thoughts about physical environments:

Environments can affect development. A study of orphans brought up in a hospital found that these children failed to develop as they should. The dull environment was blamed for this lack of normal growth. The children were in rooms with plain, white walls. They spent a lot of time in their cribs without much chance to move about and explore. The caregivers had many other duties. They were not trained to play or talk very much with the children. In short, lack of human contact and variety in the environment prevented these children from developing normally.

Colors attract. In Germany child care centers are painted yellow inside and out. They are easy to see as children and parents approach. Yellow is used especially because it is a bright, cheery, happy color.

Different people react differently. Most children find it hard to play in a crowded space. They tend to cry and fight more. This is not always the case in centers serving some cultural groups. Both Jewish and Spanish-speaking Mexican-Americans often play peacefully in very cramped spaces. With these children crowding does not always result in more conflicts.

SOME ENVIRONMENTS HAVE A LOT OF APPEAL

Toddlers are just learning to talk, so we sometimes fail to realize how much they understand. They see and take in much more than they are able to tell us. Since birth they have been watching their world. The child care center they attend is part of the community where they live. That community shapes the bulding and the people who use the center. In a military community, this may mean plain square buildings, asphalt roads and the neat, orderly layout of the installation where it is located. The center may be in an old commissary or the vacant wing of a hospital. The sameness may be boring to the eye and the mind. These buildings pose a real challenge to the caregivers who must use them. That challenge is to create an interesting environment - one which invites the toddlers to wonder, explore, learn and grow.

Imagine a plain, flat-surfaced room in the shape of a rectangle. How will the children who enter that room react? Below are some simple changes which would affect what the children will do and how they will move:

A window A window to the outside invites children to come and take a look. What's out there? Is it raining? Is anything moving?

A different level A platform just a foot above floor level makes a special place to be and to play. It need be no larger than six feet by six feet.

Special pathways A low bridge or a ramp makes more than just a pathway. These can be places to play and learn, as well as ways to get from one place to another.

An invitation to move Tunnels and slides lead children to activity and movement, crawling up, in and through.

A spot to rest A small corner, partly enclosed and quiet, allows for a change of pace. A child can stop and rest, watch the activity of others or sit and just "stare" for a while.

THE MILITARY CENTER IS PART OF A LARGER ENVIRONMENT

The military child care center is a part of the larger community created by the installation. The center environment should be planned with the needs and life-styles of children from military families in mind. For example, children may have to learn to live with frequent moves or separation from a parent. Of course, children growing up in civilian families may face some of the same situations. It is just that children in military families more often may have experiences like the ones below.

Cultural differences in the home With military installations all over the world, it is not uncommon for one parent to be from a culture different from the other. This gives children the advantage of learning firsthand about two cultures.

Living in close quarters Military housing may require family members and different families to live much closer together than they might in a civilian setting. Neighbors learn to share and help each other.

Death Death is a fact of life. In the military setting many people learn to face the reality of death and live fuller lives as a result.

Exposure to differences Children in military families may live in integrated installation housing or attend integrated schools, churches and hospitals. They have the benefit of a broader exposure to cultural differences than do children in many civilian settings.

Moving Frequent moves uproot families from the support of their communities, friends and close relatives, especially grandparents. Adjusting to new environments helps young children learn to be more adaptable.

Non-traditional family structures Duty may call a father or mother away for a week, a month, a year. Although this may be difficult, it can help develop independence and self-reliance.

Travel/language With installations all over the world, children find themselves in new lands hearing and learning new languages. They see new customs and eat new foods.

Adults have their favorite environments. Some like the hustle and bustle of city streets. Some like overstuffed furniture and dim lights with soft music in the background. Some like the quiet of a mountaintop. Others like the warmth and pleasure of sitting with family and friends around a fire. Toddlers have not had as many experiences as adults. Their choices are much more limited. They are unable to talk about their likes and dislikes. But we can be certain that they feel most comfortable in an environment that has *some* familiar things. They also like a place which appeals to *all* their senses. What toddlers see, smell, hear, touch and taste affects how they feel and behave. The center environment should help toddlers feel welcome and secure, yet interested and challenged. Every center is different. Caregivers have different ways of doing things. Yet there are some general guidelines for creating a toddler environment.

Taste Food is important to toddlers. Nutritious, tasty meals and snacks pleasantly served both nourish and please these young children.

Touch Toddlers like to feel different textures. These can be in books, animals, texture games, caregiver clothing and outdoor play experiences. A variety of textures can break the monotony of plain walls.

Sight Adults look at the whole, while toddlers see all the parts. So expect them to be interested in anything they can see - be it cleansing powder or scraps in the wastebasket.

Smell Young children have a very good sense of smell. Besides a clean environment, you can make the center more appealing with the aroma of flowers, spice-smelling jars or baking food.

Hearing The hearing of young children is very keen. Loud noises can be disturbing. Sound-absorbing materials such as draperies, carpeting or acoustic tile help to reduce the noise level in child care center rooms and make a positive environment.

ADULTS WORK BETTER IN COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENTS

So far we have talked about the center as an environment for children. It also should be comfortable and convenient for the adults who work there. Small details like adequate storage and easy access to it are important. It is frustrating and a waste of time and energy when you can't easily get to or find what you want when you want it. Helping a group of active toddlers find play, get through daily routines and solve their problems takes lots of energy and your total attention. There is no time to relax and talk to other adults. Caregivers need a staff room where they can have a few minutes away from the sights and sounds of the children. Here it is possible to relax and to safely enjoy a hot beverage. A work area with supplies and paper makes it easier for caregivers to prepare materials for their rooms. Pay attention to any annoying parts of your day. Some simple changes can make your job easier and more pleasant.

Adults work better in comfortable, convenient surroundings:

A little privacy Caregivers should have a staff room and private bathroom. A system is needed so that someone "covers" for caregivers during their breaks. A comfortable, attractive room tells the staff, "You are important, too." It is refreshing for caregivers to spend a few minutes doing whatever they choose in pleasant surroundings.

A place to sit To be at a child's eye level, caregivers spend most of their time on the floor or on child-sized chairs. An adult-sized rocker or soft chair in the room is handy for holding a child on your lap. A low bench is nice in the outdoor play yard. A caregiver can sit while talking to a child or watching the group play. Involved caregivers spend very little time in adult-sized chairs.

A convenient routine Remember, it is the people who use environments who sometimes can best see good or bad arrangements. Look for ways to complete your routines with ease and convenience. Share your ideas with your director. A simple thing like having a cart for returning dishes to the kitchen may make your job easier.

CHECK YOUR CENTER AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF

We have said that environments affect feelings and behavior. What is in the environment of the child care center is just as important to caregivers who work there as it is to the children. Put a check by the items below found in your center.

"ADULTS ONLY" ENVIRONMENT

____ locked storage for personal belongings

____ place to hang coat

____ staff room away from the sights and sounds of children

    ____ window to outside

    ____ adjustable heat/air conditioning

    ____ comfortable chairs

    ____ sofa or lounge

    ____ table and chairs

    ____ work area

    ____ private restroom

    ____ telephone

    ____ caregiver supplies

    ____ paper cutter

    ____ child care resource books

    ____ magazines

    ____ snacks, beverages available

    ____ sink, hot plate, refrigerator

    ____ things you can change, like furniture or bulletin board

    ____ opportunities to do things you like, such as to work cross-word puzzles

    ____ restroom regularly stocked with soap, towels and toilet paper

    ____ clutter and trash routinely removed

ADULTS IN THE CHILD ENVIRONMENT

____ convenient, closed indoor space

____ convenient, closed outdoor space

____ convenient, waist-high diapering table

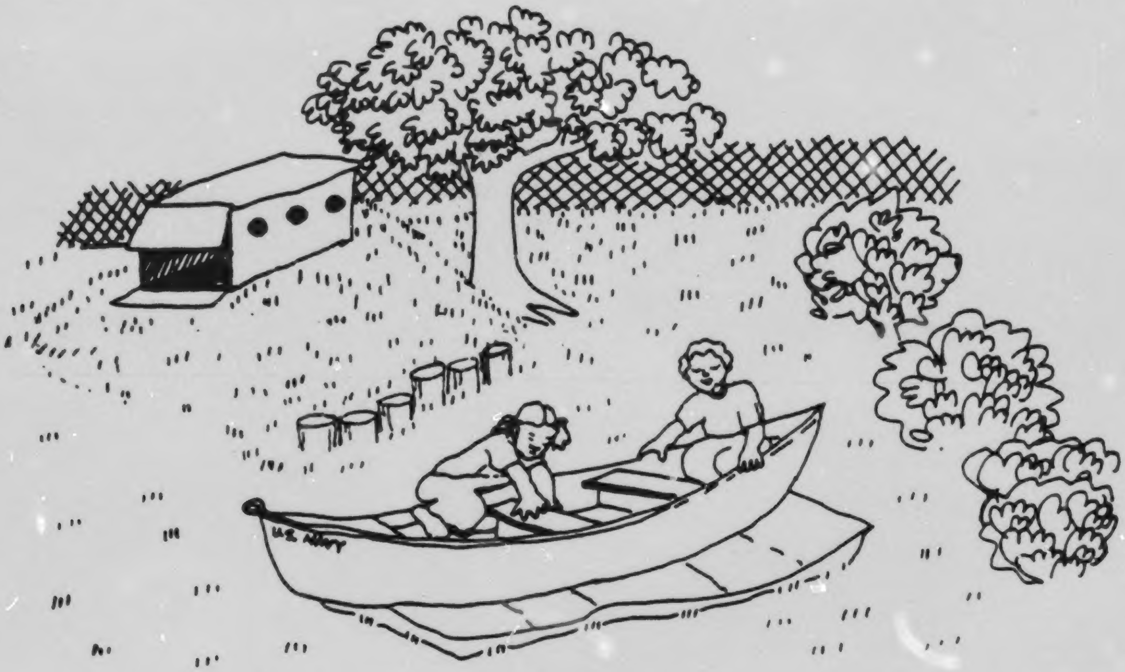
____ comfortable chair for holding child

____ easy access to cleaning supplies

____ food-serving convenient to kitchen or cart or trays used to reduce steps and simplify routines

____ low bench in outdoor play area

ARRANGING SPACE FOR TODDLERS



How the space, play units and toys in your center both indoors and outdoors are arranged is important. With toddlers you will want to have different play areas in different places. This makes the environment more interesting for them, reduces noise and helps you keep order. Toddlers like the same thing in the same place everyday. Any changes you make should be small ones - like rotating the toys available for play. Or you may want to move dividers to make a play area larger or smaller to suit your needs. Often the small details make your job easier or harder. It is helpful if any activities using water are near a sink or water source. It is easier to supervise play areas when you can see into all corners and get quickly to all areas. Convenient storage, both indoors and outdoors, is helpful, as well as child-height drinking fountains and easy access to bathrooms.

Use the environment to help solve problems:

Make the children feel welcome. A child often feels more comfortable if able to see into the play areas while still having a parent nearby. In the receiving area, caregivers greet parents and sign the toddlers in and out. This is best done near the main entry to toddler play areas. Ideally, this space is slightly separate from but has a clear view into the play areas. A place for coats and a cubby for belongings nearby make the children feel welcome.

Make room for climbing and hiding. Toddlers like to climb. If you don't have enough climbing structures, they will practice climbing on tables, chairs, fences and even caregivers. Toddlers also like to crawl into small spaces and will use cupboards or any space they can find.

Make finding and choosing easy. Good organization of space and materials makes it easier for toddlers to choose and find their own play. The more this happens, the more time caregivers have for getting to know or talking to individual children.

Carefully planned environments help young children find play they like, as well as stay with an activity for longer periods of time. Generally, both the indoor and outdoor spaces are organized in much the same way. High quality play takes place when available space is divided into different sized areas. These include large spaces for 10 to 12 toddlers; small activity spaces for one to three toddlers, plus one adult; and "get away" or private spaces for one toddler. Small hills, platforms and play units at different levels add variety and a challenge. The best plans allow children and caregivers to change the size and shape of both their indoor and outdoor spaces. Dividers, shelves, storage units on wheels, curtains, light-weight boxes and sawhorses -anything that can be moved about - allow for changing the size and shape of areas.

Here are some points to help you plan indoor and outdoor spaces:

Connect indoor and outdoor play areas. The best designs make it possible for children to see the outdoor play space from indoors. Also, it is easy for children and caregivers to move from one place to another. Outdoor play for young children should be as near their room as possible.

Plan for open space. The best play occurs in child care centers that leave no less than one-third, but no more than one-half of the play space open. These spaces can be used for more than one thing - dancing, playing games or eating snacks, for example.

Offer things at different skill levels. The more opportunities toddlers have to see and play with children of different ages the better. This can happen if some play areas are attractive to older, more skilled children and some are more attractive to younger or less skilled children.

Some of the ideas, concepts and illustrations in this section are adapted from Cohen, U., Hill, A. B., Lane, C. G., McGinty, T., & Moore, G. T., *Recommendations for child play areas,* and Moore, G. T., Lane, C. C., Hill, A. B., Cohen, U., & McGinty, T., *Recommendations for child care centers.* Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research, 1979.

OFFER CHOICES WITH CLEAR PATHWAYS IN BETWEEN

If the indoor and outdoor environments are divided into different play spaces, the children must be able to see from one area to the other. They also must be able to see how to get from one place to another. This allows the children to move freely. Pathways most often have the same surface as the surrounding floor or ground. They are simply empty, easy-to-see spaces that connect one place with another. To see how clear pathways really are, adults must kneel down to the child's eye level. While kneeling, it should be easy to look to see if a bush, a shelf or a play unit blocks your view. When toddlers are able to see areas or play units and how to get there, they can choose what they want to do next.

Check pathways to be sure that they:

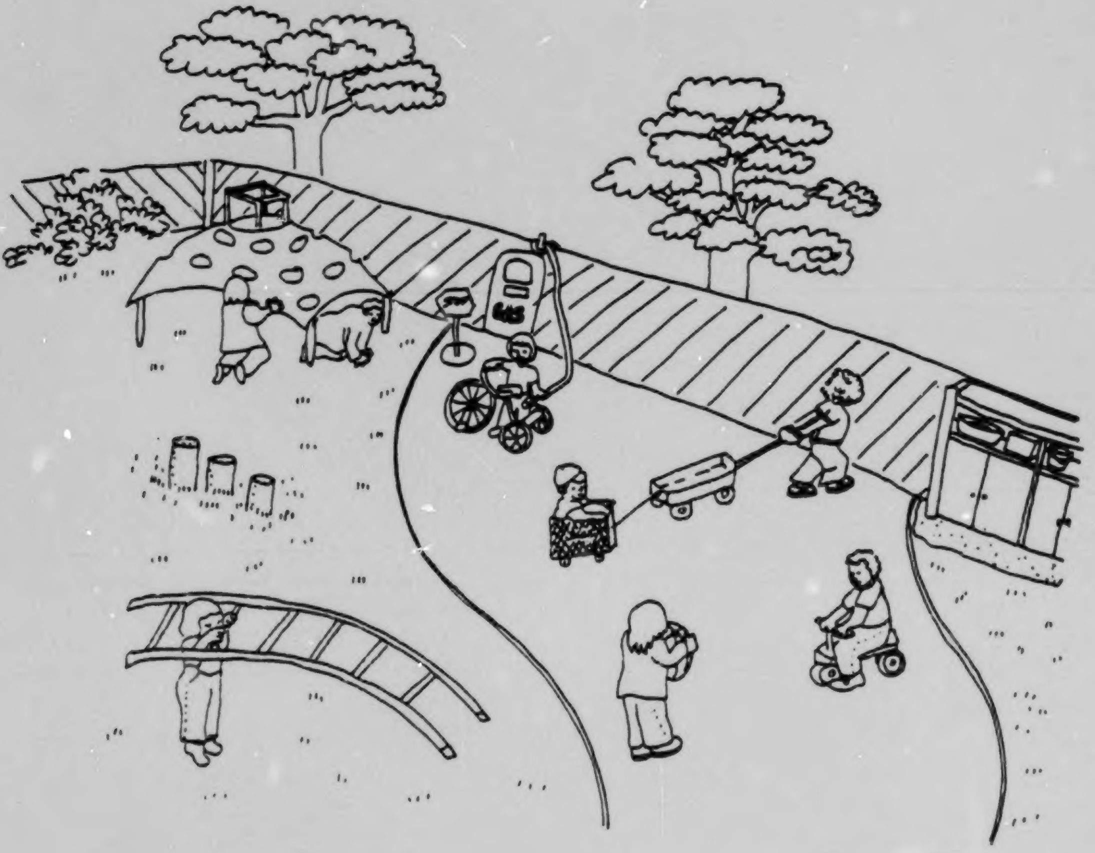
Lead to something interesting All play areas should link with other activities or something interesting elsewhere. As a toddler leaves an activity or area, he should be able to see other play units or things to do right away and how to get there.

Go around, not through other play areas The best pathways go clearly around and not through play areas. A pathway through the sandbox or block area often leads one child to disrupt another's play.

Are not cluttered Too many play units or areas too close together can cause problems. Toddlers will bump into one another when moving around. Adequate space for moving around will increase play opportunities and reduce accidents.

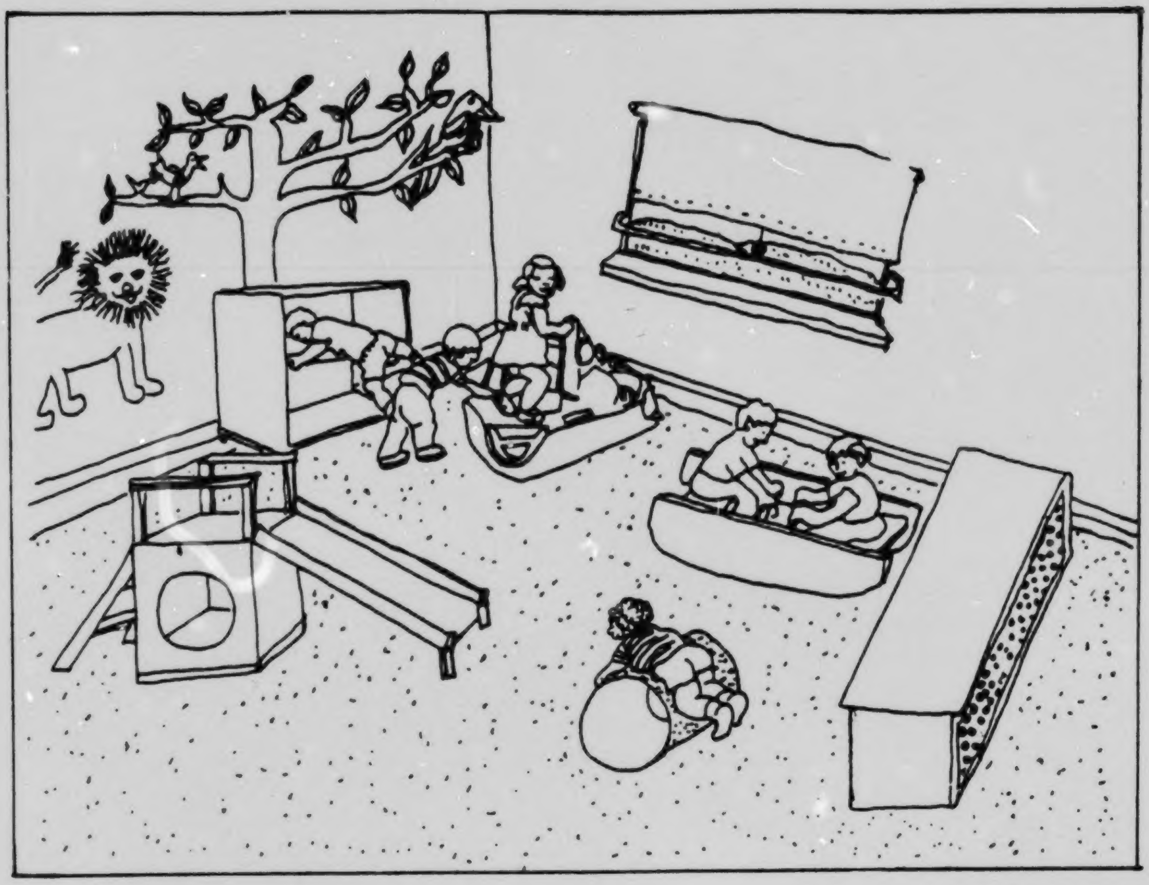
Don't lead into empty spaces Often the room or play yard arrangement results in empty spaces in the middle. There may be pathways between areas or play units that lead into the center of the room or play yard but not out of it. As a result, this empty area often becomes the place for running or rough play. The solution to this problem is to do some rearranging. You can make pathways lead to interesting and varied play by putting an activity or play unit in that space.

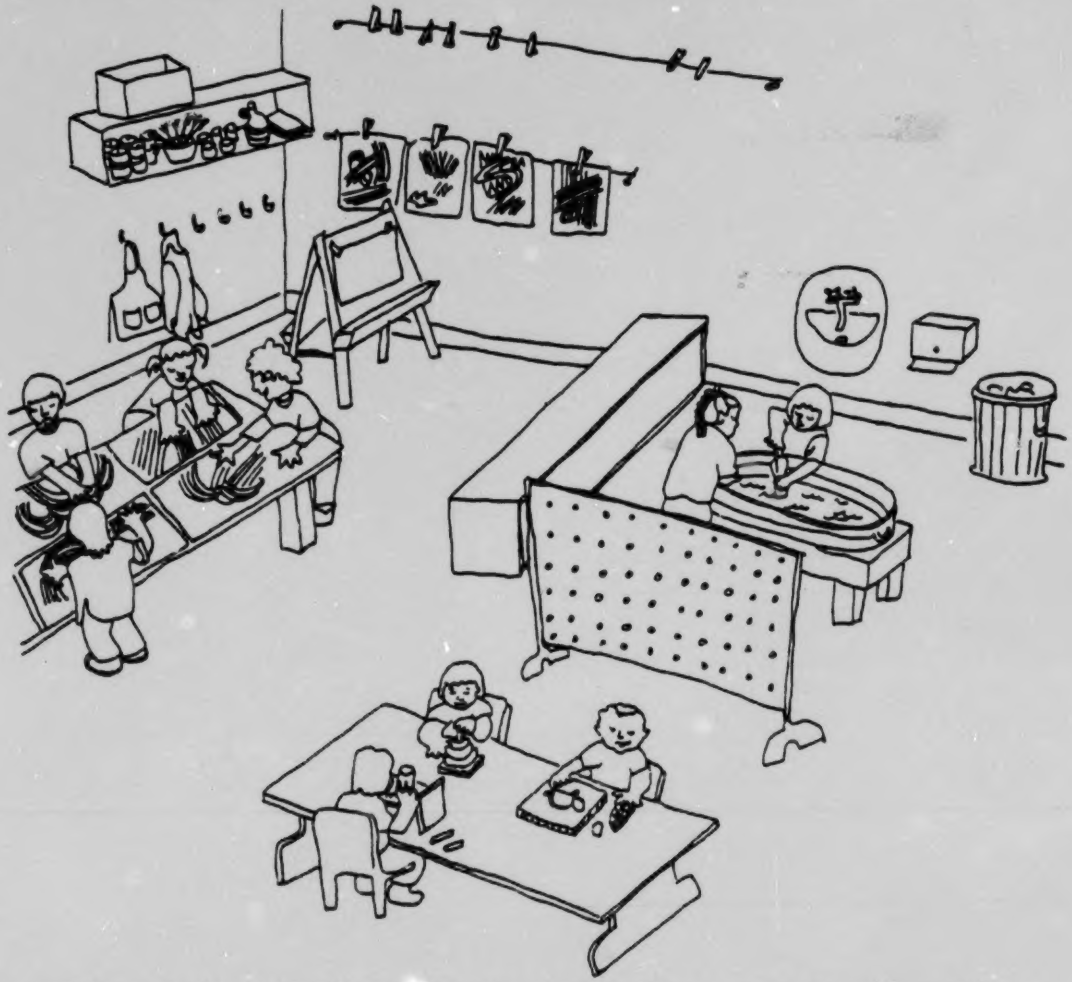
HAVE SOME LARGE ACTIVITY SPACES



In most play yards it is easy to find large activity spaces, since that is exactly what the play yard often is - one large, open play space with some play units here and there. A more ideal plan divides the play yard into different sized areas, including large activity spaces. These may have several different uses. One large grassy space can be left open. This way it is free to be used for things like running or a group music activity. A hard-surfaced large space serves for trikes, wagons and other wheeled vehicles, as well as bouncing and rolling balls. Wide, curved pathways have a special appeal. Play units including climbers, logs, spools, platforms, slides and swings may be a part of some large activity spaces. Expect active, noisy play to take place in large activity spaces.

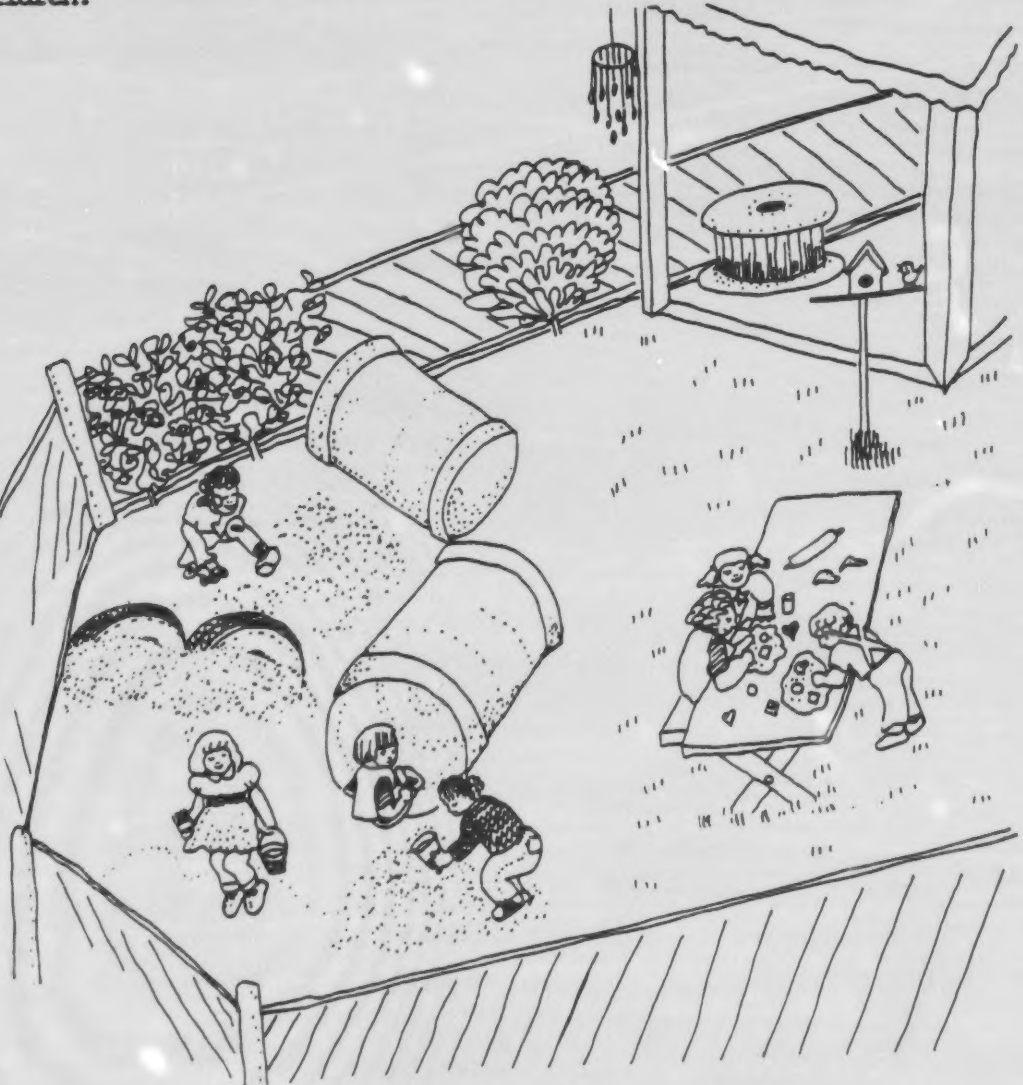
Toddlers, unlike older children, cannot wait "until later" to be active. So it is important to provide ample indoor space for moving freely. Large spaces can be used in a number of ways. Play units including stairs, ramps, small platforms, rocking boats and climbing toys will encourage climbing, jumping and sliding. Spaces for active indoor play are best carpeted. Mats absorb sound and soften falls. A large enclosed area away from main pathways makes a good place for active play with blocks on the floor. An open area may serve more than one purpose. Besides active play, other activities like having a flannel board story or showing a film may happen at other times in the same space. Remember, large areas encourage active, noisy play. Both indoors and outdoors locate these away from the small, more quiet activity spaces.



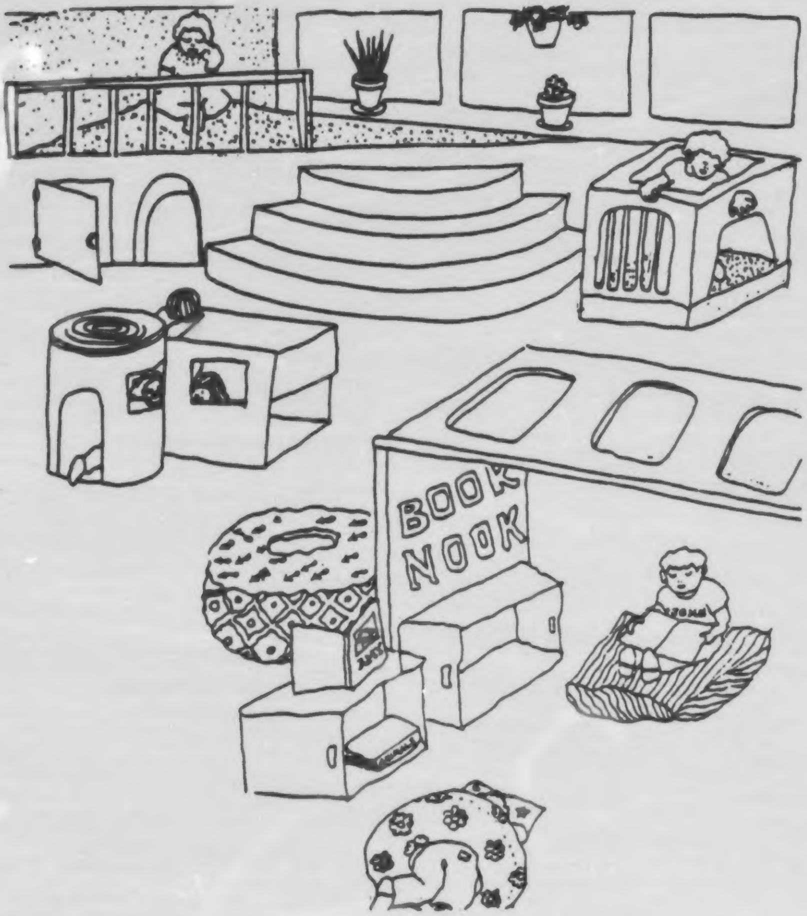


The quality of play usually is better when toddlers can play in small groups. Small areas for one to three toddlers, plus a caregiver, increase the length of time a child will stay with one activity. Areas with lots of resources which toddlers like - books, pictures, toys or materials - are best. It helps if each area has its own storage units and display shelves. These furnishings also serve as boundaries for the area and provide the children with a sense of protection and privacy while they play on or near the floor. Other ways to mark areas include different floor levels, ceiling heights, and colored dividers and rugs. All dividers should be between 12 or 18 inches tall so toddlers, when standing, can see into all areas. Play surfaces within an activity area can include the floor, a table, an easel, a chair, a square of carpeting or cushions. You might plan small activity areas for water, sand, books, magnifying glass and nature collections, messy materials like paint or play dough, small table blocks, puzzles, toys with parts, pretend play, simple musical instruments and records or tapes.

The climate where your center is located will determine how much time the toddlers can spend outdoors. Shelters, which give protection from the sun or wind, are highly desirable. They increase the length of time and kinds of activities possible outside. Whatever the case, small, partly enclosed activity spaces improve the quality of outdoor play. These spaces allow many of the same activities that take place indoors to happen outdoors. Besides these small activity spaces, a garden plot, a small fenced area for animals and trees, grass and flowers, add variety and interest to the outdoor play space. Outdoors there are various ways to give toddlers a feeling of privacy so they can "lose" themselves in play. Low bushes, half-buried tires, logs, low hills, or existing buildings can partly enclose an activity space. Of course, as children tire of an activity, they need to be able to see over these barriers so they can decide easily where to play next. Low barriers also make it easy for caregivers to see into all areas and supervise the children.

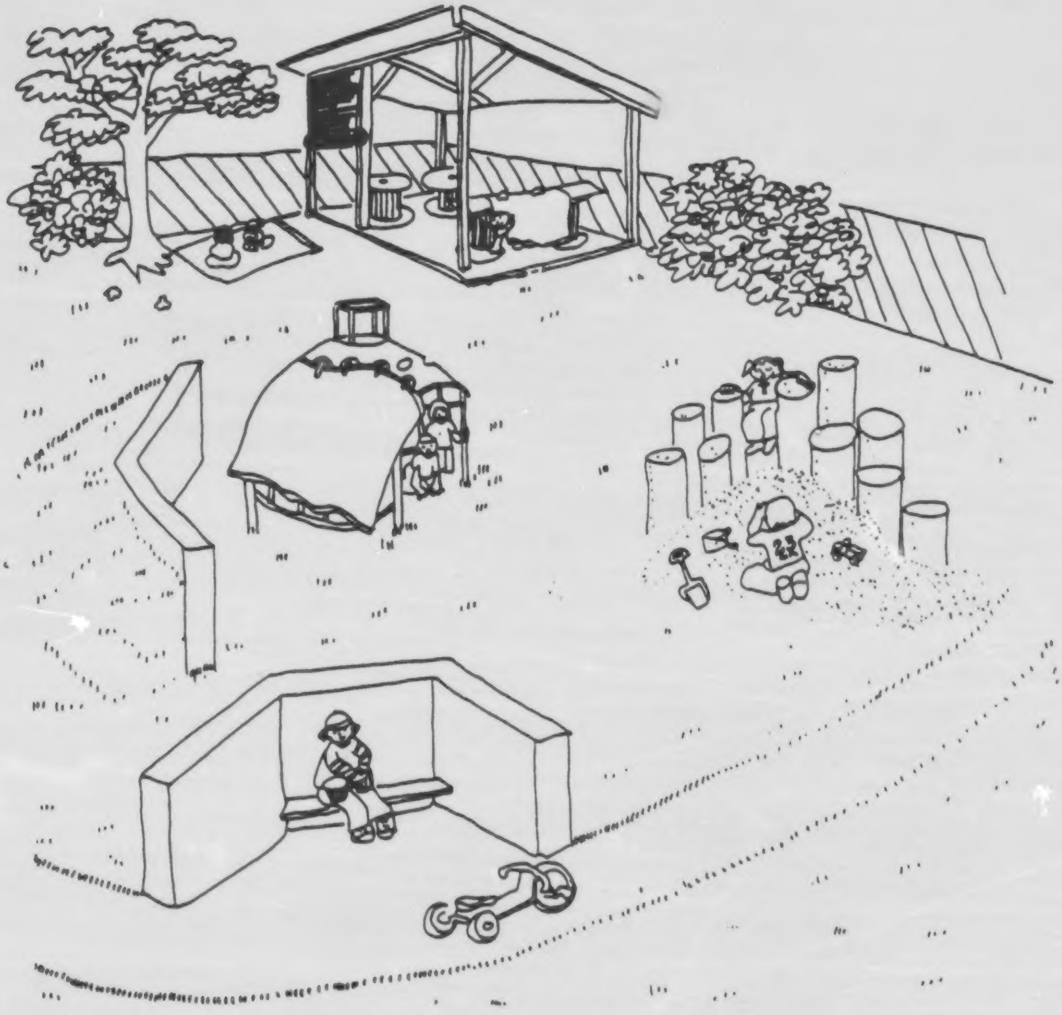


CREATE SMALL SPACES FOR GETTING AWAY AND WATCHING



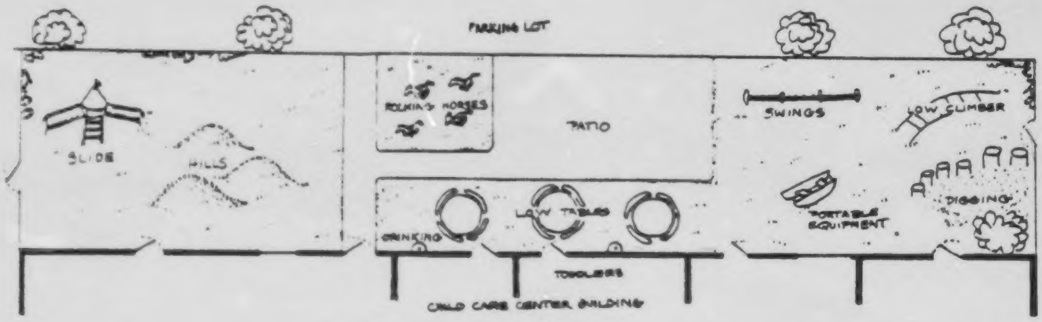
Toddlers are active and on the move much of the time. They also like and need opportunities to break away from the other children, adults or difficult play situations. A tired child may need to get away from active play for a while and just watch what is going on. So it helps if there are small areas for privacy near activity areas. Children also enjoy crawling into cozy get-away spots by themselves or with a friend or two. So look for some out-of-the-way spaces and different kinds of small private places for your toddlers. Spaces about three feet high with small entrances make good hideouts for children. During the course of a day it's all right for children to spend some time just sitting and watching. Look for ways to make cozy, child-sized areas. A child can sit and watch from small window seats, platforms, cubby-holes or under stairs.

Small spaces for getting away and watching are as important outdoors as indoors. There are a few points to consider if you plan to add private places to your center environment. Child-sized spaces work best. Adults clearly should not be able to fit into these private spaces. However, adults should be able to reach hiding places if their help is needed. Caregivers can make private spaces from boxes, tents, barrels and tunnels. With a little help children will make their own private spaces. Give them blankets or sheets, boards and hollow blocks. They will build little caves and crawl in. Private spaces can be up on platforms or ledges, allowing toddlers to look down on activities and observe the other children at play. Have small spots for getting away near activity areas. This way a child is free to leave a difficult or demanding play situation easily. Also have some quiet, cozy corners in out-of-the-way places.



TAKE A LOOK AT ONE OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

The plan below shows a toddler outdoor play area at a military child care center, located in a moderate climate. The play area took its shape as a result of having to be located in the only space available. See if you can spot the strong and weak points of this space. Compare your thoughts about its strengths and weaknesses with those listed below.


PARKING LOT
ROCKING HORSES
PATIO
SWINGS
LOW CLIMBER
SLIDE
HILLS
LOW TABLES
DRINKING
PORTABLE EQUIPMENT
DIGGING
TODDLERS
CHILD CARE CENTER BUILDING

Here are some - certainly not all - of the strong and weak points of this play area:

STRENGTHS

easy access to indoors

play units spaced and located to avoid crowding and accidents

child-height tables for snacks and doing indoor activities outdoors

hard surface for trikes and balls; grass for running and other games

child-sized drinking fountains

small hills add variety

easy to supervise with all areas in clear view

WEAKNESSES

needs clear organization into different sized areas, with clear pathways from one area to the other

lacks beauty, variety and eye-appeal

lacks water and sand play

lacks "loose parts" for building and for changing areas

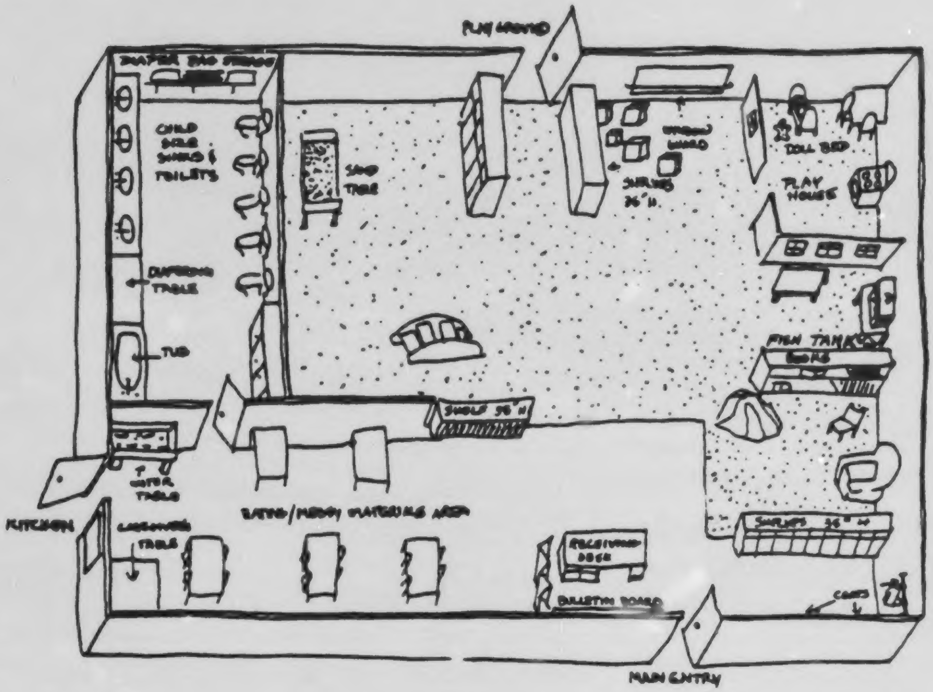
lacks outdoor storage

lacks shelter from sun and wind

low barriers needed to separate swings from rest of play area for safety

TAKE A LOOK AT ONE INDOOR PLAY AREA

This plan shows a toddler room in a military child care center. The children have access to another large indoor space for active play and naps, as well as an outdoor play space. See if you can spot the strong and weak points of this room. Compare your thoughts with those listed below.


PLAY GROUND
DIAPER BAG STORAGE
CHILD SIZE SINKS & TOILETS
SAND TABLE
SHELVES 36" H
DOLL BED
PLAY HOUSE
DIAPERING TABLE
TUB
FISH TANK
BOOKS
SHELF 36" H
WATER TABLE
KITCHEN
CAREGIVER'S TABLE
EATING/MESSY MATERIALS AREA
SHELVES 36" H
RECEIVING DESK
BULLETIN BOARD
COATS
MAIN ENTRY

STRENGTHS

receiving area near main entry but separate from main play areas

toys and space for active, indoor play

playhouse and book area provide for some small-group play

door from indoor play area opens directly to outdoor play yard

messy materials and eating near sinks and over washable floor coverings

rug in active and floor play areas

WEAKNESSES

needs careful reorganization of space to include more small activity and private spaces

needs clear pathways from one activity space to another

needs another level for variety

both toddlers' and caregivers' views blocked by wall between bathroom and play area

toddlers cannot see over shelves

hard for toddlers to see water table in the corner or where to play next when finished

CHECK YOUR CENTER'S TODDLER PLAY SPACES

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about your center's toddler play areas. Think about ways to provide areas and opportunities for play which your center may not have.

ORGANIZATION OF PLAY YARD

___ easy access to outdoors from indoor play areas

___ variety of play spaces linked to each other, offering a wide choice of play activities

___ opportunities for toddlers to see and play with children of different ages

___ some play areas attractive to older or more skilled children and some attractive to younger or less skilled children

___ bushes, shelters, porches or other barriers to protect play areas from winter winds and extreme summer suns

___ play structures spaced and located to avoid crowding and accidents

___ active play areas near each other and away from quiet play areas

___ bushes, low hills or other barriers to partly enclose toddler play spaces

___ clear visibility into all areas of the play yard

___ convenient storage for outdoor equipment

___ play spaces for a variety of group sizes

  ___ boxes, tents or tunnels for one child to "get away"
  ___ tires, logs or bushes creating small areas for one to three toddlers
  ___ open spaces for active or group play

___ opportunities for caregivers and children to change the size of areas by moving dividers, boards or tires

___ easy access to bathrooms

___ outdoor water source and drinking fountains

___ child-proof fences and gates

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY AREAS AVAILABLE

___ paved play areas for trike paths, wide pathways and hard-surfaced areas for balls and games

___ open grassy or soft-surface play areas for tumbling, running or sitting

___ large play areas for climbers, logs, spools, slides, platforms and swings

___ play areas with "loose parts," such as boxes, tires, planks and blocks or other moveable play structures

___ natural environment spots with native plants, trees, rocks, insects

___ special-interest areas such as garden plots, fenced animal areas, water play and sand play areas

___ play areas at different levels - platforms, tunnels, rocks, things to get in and under, behind and on top of

ORGANIZATION OF INDOOR SPACES

___ space for greeting parents and toddlers near main entry

  ___ cubby for each child

  ___ a place to hang coats

___ a variety of spaces linked together, offering a wide choice of play activities

  ___ large activity space for 10 to 12 toddlers
  ___ several small activity spaces for one to three children
  ___ "get away" or private spaces for one or two toddlers

___ clear pathways to exits and between different areas in the room

___ all areas in plain view of standing children

___ different areas clearly marked by shelves, floor levels, ceiling heights, low dividers, colors or floor coverings

___ easy access to toilet facilities

___ water source near creative arts area

___ eating area near kitchen

___ caregivers can see into all corners of the room

___ closed storage for supplies

___ cot or mat storage area

INDOOR ACTIVITY AREAS

___ large group activity area
___ floor play area for blocks
___ dress-up area
___ area for puzzles and small toys
___ book area
___ table blocks
___ active play units
___ sand table
___ nature study area
___ messy materials area
___ music area
___ water table

MAKING CENTER SPACES LIVEABLE

KEEP IMAGINATIONS ALIVE

The value of toys and play units is in the design not the original cost of the item. They can be found, made or bought. What counts is how long and how well children play with the things around them. The best toys and play units allow children to use their imaginations, to make up their own pretend games and to move and change things. Whatever equipment you may have, look for ways to promote lots of high-quality, engaging play for the toddlers in your care. All play units should be designed to present a challenge without too great a risk to the child's safety.

Look for ways to encourage imagination:

Find things with more than one use. Climbers, platforms, rocks or a section of drain pipe which can be used in different ways promote choices. Children will use the same thing as a house, fort or airplane. Some play units are built to look like one thing, such as a rocket or covered wagon. These may limit the children's ideas for pretend play. A toddler can build with, sit or stand on or push around a hollow block.

Give toddlers choices. A slide that is built into the side of a small hill offers choices. A toddler can climb steps or a ladder to get to the top of the slide. Crawling on hands and knees up the hill is another approach to the slide. Children can scoot down the sloping sides of the hill, as well as use the slide.

Include moveable objects. The more loose parts children can have to move and change in their play environment, the better. Whole areas both indoors and out can be set aside for using moveable planks, boxes, sawhorses and hollow blocks. Another plan is to use some moveable pieces with other play units. With loose parts toddlers can move things about, change the size and shape of areas or build their own private spaces.

Make small changes. Little surprises help keep imaginations alive. Once in a while add something different to the environment like cardboard cartons. Tie colorful streamers around the play yard on a windy day.

ADD VARIETY BY CREATING DIFFERENT LEVELS

For the child who spends many hours each day in the center, a change of pace is very important. Different levels both indoors and out help the toddler find different places to be and a variety of things to do. A carpeted platform just a foot or so high makes a special place for lounging or playing quietly. It is also a nice place for looking at books. It is a cozy spot for a caregiver to read to toddlers or tell a story. A play house on two levels is fun. One level can have kitchen furnishings. The other beds and dolls. A platform next to a window which is above toddler eye level helps. The raised level next to a safely protected window gives the children a view to the outside. Changing floor levels is an easy way to put toddlers closer to caregiver eye level. Toddlers on lofts and platforms are closer to the eye level of an adult who is standing.

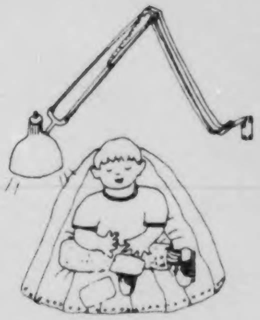
Think of all the levels that you can use to add variety to indoor and outdoor spaces:

cushions
hassocks
bridges
window seats
platforms
benches
pits
play units
stairs
climbing trees
drain pipes
tires
slides
rocks
logs
climbers
ramps

Low ceilings are more inviting than high ceilings. Fishnet, fabric parachutes or banners can be hung from high ceilings. Fabric absorbs sound, as well as adding interest, color and softness to a room. Just avoid blocking sprinkler systems.

USE COLOR AND LIGHTING TO CREATE MOODS

Color and lighting can be used to make the center a more comfortable, cheery place. It helps if you know how colors affect people. To most people the warm colors like red, orange and yellow are exciting. The cool colors like blue, green and purple are relaxing. When choosing colors, try relaxing colors like blue or light green in quiet areas such as the book corner. Orange and the bright colors are better in active play areas or as a decoration in the entry. Large rooms look smaller if you paint the walls or part of each wall a different color or shade of the same color. Neutral colors for shelves are best so toys are easy to see. A red toy on a red shelf is hard to see. Lighting, too, can be used to feature an area or activity. Hanging a lamp over the reading area varies the lighting in the room and sets that area off as special.



Here are some ways to vary the color and lighting in your room:

Add a splash of color. Posters, large sheets of colored paper, or tie-dyed or batiked sheets may help when you cannot paint. Catch the light from windows in prisms or reflecting and transparent objects. Colored cellophane, aluminum foil art projects and plastic "stained glass" add color to windowsills.

Turn off the lights. If your room has fluorescent lights, choose times like during snack or a group movement activity to turn off the lights. Removing the glare of the lights helps change the mood.

Choose simple colors and decorations. Color and decorations add a nice touch, but avoid too much of either. Have some quiet, plain walls. Choose simple colors. The confusion of too much color and too many things to look at can overexcite some children.

Give the walls some interest. Even if you aren't artistic you can create attractive decorations with the help of an opaque projector. Find a clear illustration you like and project it on the wall. Trace the outline and paint it.

Soft things are often hard to find in a child care center. In general, soft things covered with fabric require more care and cleaning than easy-care plastic, formica or linoleum. However, children need to have comfortable, cozy spaces and soft playthings in their environment. Check the health rules for your center. Then be alert to things you can do to make the center a softer place to be. For example, if there are no animals to hold, make sure a child can find other soft things. These might include sitting in a caregiver's lap, using finger paints, molding play dough, digging in dirt or playing in sand or water.

Think of all the ways you can add softness and variety to the textures in your center:

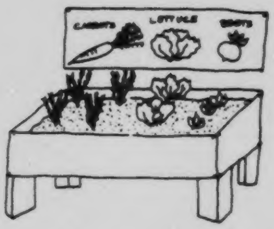
Use carpeting in creative ways. Use carpeting, rug scraps and carpet samples wherever you can. Some areas of the room definitely require more softness than others. Cover the inside and outside of a packing barrel with carpeting to make a soft, private space for a child. Put carpeting on walls, ramps, platforms and boxes.

Let fabrics soften various areas. Fabrics can add color, help absorb sound and soften the center environment. Curtains may dress up a window, as well as help control the natural light. If you have a playhouse, don't overlook the possibility of hanging curtains in it.

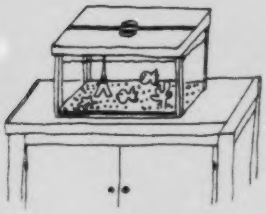
Use lots of pillows. Pillows with washable covers are a good way to add softness and variety in textures. Making pillow covers is a good project for sponsors, volunteers or parent groups.

Make use of nature's soft textures. Look for soft surfaces to use outside. These include grass, sand, dirt, water, straw and sawdust. If your play yard is sadly lacking any of these, look for ways to take your children to places where these soft surfaces are more available.

Living things - plants, animals and fish - will add interest and beauty to your center. Put houseplants in different parts of the room. Special shelves with holes for flower pots keep them secure. Rules regarding the keeping of animals vary from center to center. Check with your director. If permitted, small animals like rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs and hamsters make good room pets. A fenced area in the play yard for small animals allows for lots of contact between the children and animals. With plants and animals, children learn about caring for other living things. Animals must be fed daily and plants watered weekly. Most important of all they gain some understanding of the life cycles of different plants and animals. Of course, you will have to see that the children learn to be humane and gentle. Be sure that things do not get dropped into the fish tank or plants are not uprooted. With space set aside for plants you can show how they get their beginnings. Some start from cuttings, some from seeds and others from bulbs. You can grow things in a small garden plot, pots, tubs or sandboxes.



Here are some ways to make the center environment more alive with plants and animals:



Houseplants Hang pots with ropes and small pulleys. The children can help you lower the plants and water them. Make terrariums or gardens in jars with the children. Some houseplants are poisonous. Be sure to decorate with those that are not.

Sprouts Seeds like alfalfa, radish, mung bean or garbanzo bean are easy to sprout. Once sprouted, these can be used in a cooking activity or for making salads.

Insect farms Toy stores and mail order catalogs sell ant farms. Worm farms are easy to make. Put some soil and worms in a glass container. Cover the sides of the container with paper. Remove the paper from time to time and you should be able to see the worms at work.

Visitors bringing animals If regulations prevent you from keeping animals in the center, invite parents, humane society workers, game farm employees or zookeepers to bring small animals for short visits.

RATE YOUR CENTER FOR "WARMTH"

Check out your center's indoor and outdoor environment. Score one point for each item you check on the list below.

____ bean bag chair
____ grass
____ "laps"
____ soft animals

____ stuffed chair
____ large carpet or rug
____ sandbox or sand area
____ clay or play dough
____ soft swing seats

____ lawn swing
____ floor cushions
____ mud
____ finger paints
____ dirt for digging*

____ toddlers can move loose parts about

____ play units and toys can be used in more than one way

____ most of the time no more than 12 toddlers share any play space

____ the toddler area has a cozy feeling with warm colors, like yellow or orange, soft materials, some natural lighting, and curtains

____ caregivers spend most of their time at toddler's eye level, sitting on the floor or kneeling while talking to toddlers

____ caregivers seem to be enjoying themselves and the toddlers more than they seem irritated or angry

____ caregivers' faces and movements match what they are saying

Score your center's toddler area:

If you checked:

17-23 Your center offers a warm environment for toddlers. What can you do to improve the items you didn't check?

10-16 You know some of the center's strong points, now you can work to make some changes in things which may improve the environment.

0-9 If you were able to check only a few items, your center probably provides a fairly uninviting atmosphere for toddlers. It is very important for healthy growth and development that young children's environments make them feel secure and provide for individual attention by caring adults. Pick one item from the list and begin right now to bring some more warmth into your toddler area.

*These *soft* items are taken from Elizabeth Prescott's *Assessment of Child-Rearing Environments: An Ecological Approach*. California: Pacific Oaks College, 1975.

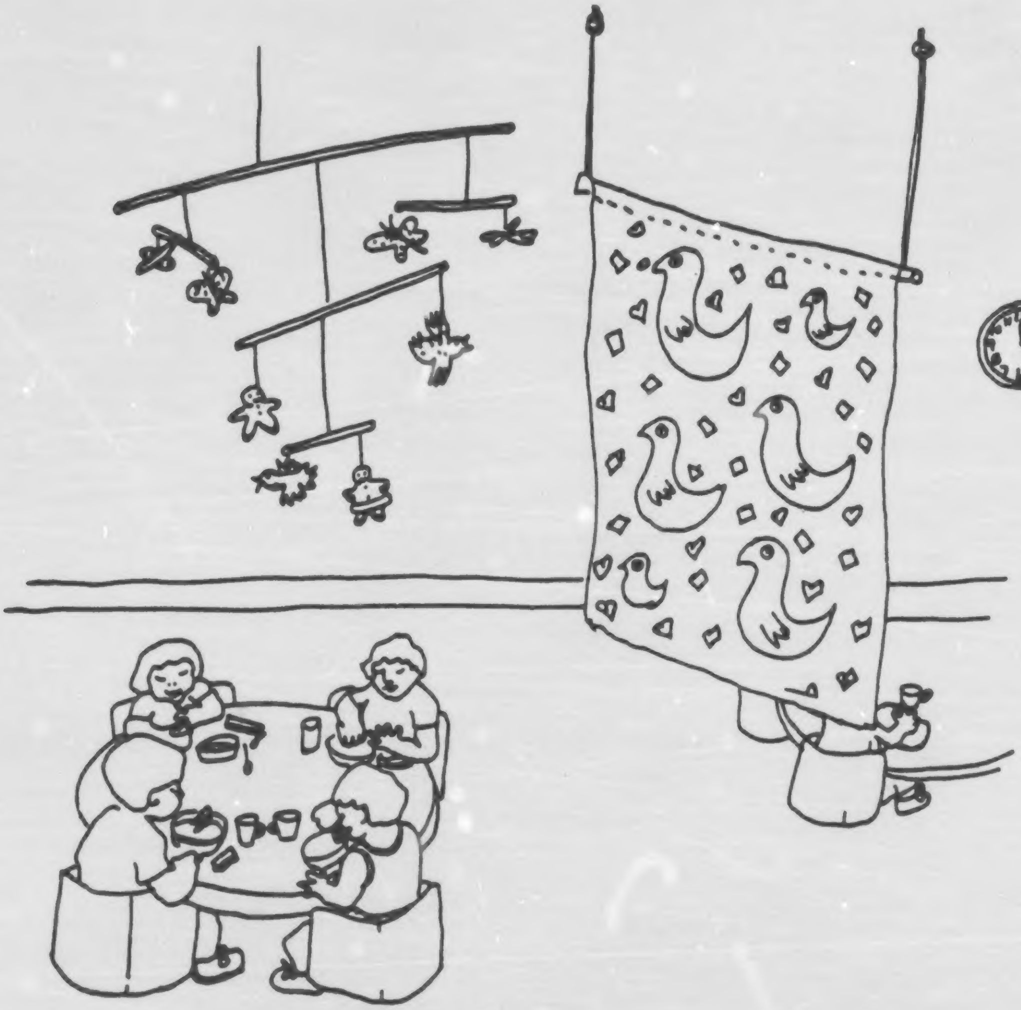
ADDING THE HUMAN TOUCH TO CENTER ENVIRONMENTS

PART TWO

IN PART TWO you will discover:

- tips for managing the toddler environment
- ways to support the children's personal growth
- things that toddlers can and like to do
- some creative ways to use materials
- some suggested resources

MANAGING TODDLER ENVIRONMENTS CREATIVELY



It may help you plan for each day if you give some thought to how you spend your time. Sometimes you will want to allow the toddlers in your room to play, explore and learn on their own. At other times you will want to play a game or do an activity with one child or a small group. Toddlers, like other children and adults, need a change of pace. This may happen more easily in their home environments. At home there is not the activity and excitement of a group of children. In a group setting, caregivers can play a game or direct an activity when a child is bored, over-excited or upset. This way caregivers can help one or several children change from one behavior to another. Another reason for direct involvement is to help a child learn. Toddlers learn a great deal from their play. But understanding adults can help toddlers learn problem solving and language, as well as the joy of sharing and human contact.

Work for a balance in how much you direct your toddlers everyday:

Free-choice During much of the toddler's day, you give little direction. You have set out some toys and arranged the play space. As the children choose what to do, you watch and are available to help a child as the need arises. Usually, the adult is not directly involved during times of free-choice play.

Caregiver-directed activity While involved in an activity with one child, you direct your attention to that child. You sing a song, talk about pictures in a book or build blocks with just one child. Skilled caregivers learn to play with one young child while still keeping an eye on the other toddlers in the room.

Small group activity With toddlers, caregivers only direct *small* groups for *short* periods of time. This means no more than four or five children for no more than five or ten minutes at a time. Caregivers must be able to direct total attention to the activity which may be dancing or telling a flannel board story.

KEEP TODDLER GROUP SIZE SMALL

For toddlers both group size and the number of children for each adult in the room need to be considered. In small groups caregivers talk and play more with the children than they do in large groups. Toddlers in larger groups often fuss more and spend more time wandering aimlessly. The total number of children grouped together in one center play area makes a big difference in the quality of the child care experience. Children in two groups of 12 with two caregivers in each group play better than one group of 24 with four caregivers. The number of caregivers to children is another important factor. Small group size and enough adults for the number of children are the keys to quality child care.

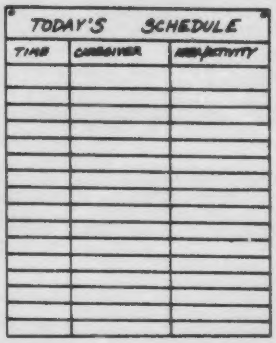
Look for ways to keep group size small:

Try dividing a room. A center with a lot of children in one large room might try dividing the room. The result would be two or more rooms with groups just the right size. Remodeling or adding partitions are the best solutions. When this isn't possible, there are other ways to divide a room. Shelves and curtains or banners can be used together to divide one large room. Careful planning may be necessary to arrange for sharing toileting areas, sinks and play areas.

Try using sub-groups. Another solution to the problem of a large group is to divide it into smaller groups. One caregiver stays in the room with a group. Another caregiver takes a group to an indoor playroom elsewhere in the center or to the outdoor play yard.

Try finding volunteers. Some centers are very successful at finding and using volunteers. Having an extra adult in the room on a regular basis can increase the number of adults per children and help increase the opportunities for these young children to talk and play with one adult in a casual, fun way.

GIVE SOME ORDER TO THE TODDLERS' DAY



Toddlers can't tell time, but they like a regular daily routine. The longer they are in the center, the more they will come to know the daily schedule and expect certain things to happen at certain times. This can be a great help to you and make your job easier. The important thing to remember with toddlers is to leave enough time for changing from one activity to another or going from inside to outside play. The exact schedule you follow will vary according to the number of hours your center is open each day. Even if your center provides drop-in care, a regular schedule gives the staff a pattern to follow each day. You will note the schedule below devotes most time to free-play activities. Just before snack and just before lunch are good times for calling the toddlers together for a group activity. Plan for a diaper check or toileting once each hour. This would happen during the morning free-play and activities period, after snack, after lunch, after nap, before going outside in the afternoon and just before the expected return time of parents.

Below is a sample schedule for a toddler room. If your center is open more hours, you will have to add to this schedule:

0630–0800	arrival, free play and breakfast
0800–0930	free play and caregiver-directed activities
0930–0945	small group activity like music, dancing, stories or finger plays offered
0945–1000	snack
1015–1115	outdoor free play and activities
1130–1145	small-group activity like flannel board, books or puppets offered
1145–1215	lunch
1230–1430	naps - toddlers get up as they awaken
1500–1515	snack
1530–1615	outdoor play and activities
1615–1730	quiet play and caregiver-directed activities
1730–1800	dinner

You may find that getting through daily routines with toddlers takes more time than it does with older children. Getting ready to go outside, for example, is slower because you will want to allow toddlers to put on their own coats. Toddlers need extra time while learning to manage their own buttons or zippers. Keep in mind that if there are specific plans for handling routine tasks, you will spend less time managing eating, toileting and the like. This means you will have more time for talking to and playing with the toddlers in your care.

Here are some ways to handle routines:

Make a plan for toileting. Toddlers still in diapers are most comfortable when checked every hour. You will want a system to ensure that all toddlers are checked each time.

Make a plan for getting indoors and out. Exactly how you get from one place to another will depend on the number of toddlers and caregivers in your room. Moving small groups works best. Allow time for toddlers to help themselves and each other with buttons and zippers.

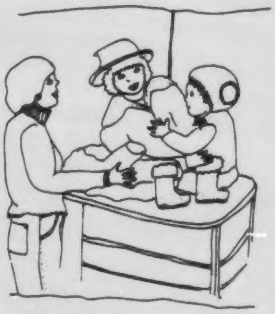
Make a plan for snacks and mealtimes. Most toddlers are eager to eat so be prepared ahead of time. Have ways to move to and from meals and snacks. Before it is time to serve food to toddlers, make a quick check to see that everything you need is ready, including sponges and mops for cleaning up spills.

Have a plan for napping. Following a regular routine makes it easier for toddlers to know that it is time to settle down for sleep. Toddlers will go to sleep more promptly and with less fussing if the nap area is ready for them when they are ready to nap.

Have a plan for receiving parents. It is wise if one specific caregiver at a time has the duty of greeting toddlers and parents. Keeping track of expected return time of parents is helpful. This way a toddler's belongings can be readied and the day's information is ready to be exchanged.

MANAGE THE RECEIVING AREA EFFECTIVELY

How you greet parents and toddlers and how quickly and efficiently you can conduct the routine of checking the toddlers in and out of your room is important. A receiving area near the main door is helpful. Devise a system to assure that a caregiver greets every toddler and parent as they arrive in the room. If a "health-check" is not done elsewhere in the center, use the greeting time to make a quick check of the toddler's physical appearance, looking for signs of illness, such as flushed cheeks or puffy eyes. Follow your center's policies. As parents check their toddlers in, fill in all forms and charts used in your center. Take time to talk to parents so everyone is as fully informed as possible. Someone also should keep track of the expected return time of parents. Then just before parents are to arrive, diapers can be checked and diaper bag made ready. Then when parents arrive for their toddler, caregivers can quickly and easily share routine information and their personal observations. Charts also provide for communication from a caregiver who may have finished working before the parents pick up their toddler.



Below are some suggestions for a receiving area in your toddler room:

Desk or table You will need a place to store forms, papers, pencils and other supplies. A desk or table near the door is essential furniture in any receiving area.

Daily charts The kinds of charts or records you keep for parents will depend upon the number of toddlers in your room and how frequently they are there. In either case, a toddler room needs a method to keep track of toileting, eating and sleeping, as well as other details. This is best located in or near the receiving area.

Report forms Any forms you need to share with parents such as accident report forms or daily information forms should be handy in the receiving area.

Parents' bulletin board Share the latest in child development, ideas for play or photos of the toddlers in your room with parents. Locate a bulletin board near the door so caregivers and parents can share information and ideas.

PLAN EATING ROUTINES CAREFULLY

Snacks and meals can be more pleasant if very specific routines are worked out and followed. While toddlers eat to satisfy their hunger, you can use snack and mealtime to serve other purposes such as developing language. If it is at all possible, plan to serve food to small groups of toddlers - say six toddlers with one adult. This assures each toddler can talk and be talked to. You can manage this by staggering the eating - some toddlers eat while others are busy elsewhere. Adults can set a good example by sitting with and eating the same food as the children. In small groups toddlers will find snack and mealtimes pleasant, positive, learning experiences. Remember, the more toddlers can do for themselves, the better for you and for them. Use small tables and chairs they can manage independently. Follow your center's routine for keeping track of allergies and what food is eaten. Involve toddlers in serving the food and cleaning up after themselves.

Below are some things to consider when serving food to toddlers:

Follow a quiet activity. Have snacks and meals after a quiet, calm activity so toddlers will be ready to eat.

Get those hands clean. Since toddlers may use their hands to eat, they need to wash their hands before snacks and meals.

Encourage new foods. Ask toddlers to try new foods, but do not force young children to eat foods they openly refuse.

Start with small servings. Remember, toddlers have small stomachs. Make servings small and fill cups only half full. A hungry toddler will ask for seconds.

Serve finger foods. Most toddlers can use spoons with ease and skill but also enjoy bite-sized pieces and finger foods they can eat with their hands. With small groups and careful supervision, toddlers can help themselves. Each can select a tidbit from the serving plate.

HANDLE TODDLER NAP TIME SUCCESSFULLY

Toddlers need a nap everyday. Some toddlers may resist naps, crying or rolling around restlessly. With a regular routine and patient but firm guidance from you, most toddlers will adjust to taking naps and settle down to sleep quickly and easily. A good routine is to have just a few children at a time go from lunch to the bathroom to toilet and wash. From there they can go directly to their cots. In some centers, the toddlers play in a *quiet place* for a few minutes before they go to their cots. Another plan is to have a quiet group time. Then one caregiver can dismiss one or two children at a time while another helps them settle down. Whatever the case, it works best if nap time is staggered. It is easier for both children and caregivers if just a few toddlers are settling down at the same time. Caregivers find that it is a regular nap time routine that helps children fall asleep. Of course, in centers which provide drop-in care, children are not familiar with the routine and may need special comforting and help from a caregiver in order to adjust to nap time. As each toddler wakes up, let the child get up, toilet and play quietly.

Here are some hints for toddler nap time:

Stagger and space the cots. Toddlers seem to settle down better when the cots are staggered instead of in even rows. Keep the cots three feet apart all the way round.

Put toddlers head-to-toe. It helps toddlers fall asleep faster if you put them head-to-toe on their cots instead of having their heads next to each other.

Check the environment for softness. You center probably has regular nap time routines about such things as darkening the room or playing soft music. Learn these routines and follow them. More importantly, you can make sure your voice, movements and manner are firm but calm and restful. This is not the time for staff members to whisper and gossip.

Follow your center's routines. Carefully follow your center's routines for disinfecting the cots or mats after the toddlers are finished napping.

MANAGE TOILETING POSITIVELY

At about 30 months, a child is able physically to learn bowel and bladder control. So the toddlers in your room are likely to be at different stages of learning potty skills. Since toilet learning is at its peak for toddlers, it is important to have an adequate potty area. Separate bathrooms for boys and girls are not necessary at this age. Caregivers should follow carefully their center's routine. Fill in all required charts. This is a good time for health checks. One plan is to have a caregiver assigned to manage toileting every hour. The other caregivers can send a few toddlers at a time to the potty area. According to age and stage, the toddler sits on the toilet or has a diaper changed. Before leaving the area, each is offered a drink and smudges are wiped off faces and hands. Self-help can be encouraged. Toddlers can help dress and undress themselves. They can be shown how to wash their own hands. Toddlers who already have learned how to stay dry are free to enter the potty area whenever they feel the need.

Here are some ways to manage toileting positively:

Keep diaper bags handy. There should be adequate storage for each toddler's diapers and dry clothes *in* the potty area. Get what you need before you put a toddler on the changing table.

Keep a supply of extra clothing. You will need to keep a supply of extra clothing for toddlers. Even when parents are asked to bring extra clothing, you still need an emergency supply of diapers, underpants, slacks and shirts.

Watch yourself. With toddlers expect "accidents" and smelly bowel movements. Your face and voice may tell the truth about how you feel. Learn to handle all toileting experiences in a casual, easy manner.

Toilet Learning *by Alison Mack (Little Brown & Company, 1978) is a good book to recommend to a parent who asks you for advice. This book has a guide for parents to follow and pictures to use with children.*

BE FLEXIBLE WITH DROP-IN CARE

If your center provides drop-in or occasional child care with no advance reservations required, you must be flexible since parents may arrive at any time to drop off or pick up their children. You have to be ready to modify your plans as attendance changes. Knowing what toddlers can and like to do and having plenty of activities ready is the key to successfully managing a room full of toddlers. One minute toddlers can be roaming around the room, many sniffling for "Mommy" or "Daddy." The next minute they can be playing happily. The secret is a caregiver who invites some to play at the sand table and interests others in the pegboard. Then the caregiver invites a few to look at books and listen to a story. It may be helpful if you are aware of attendance trends. In military child care centers, for example, paydays usually ensure more children will be in attendance.

Here are some ways to meet the challenge of drop-in care:

Name tags It is always comforting to children if you use their names, so name tags are helpful. With masking tape and a marking pen you can make name tags quickly.

Child's level Coming into a strange room full of children may be a frightening experience for some toddlers. As a caregiver, you will want to get down to the toddler's level as much as possible to help comfort and console.

Supervising plan Besides planning for a variety of toys and activities, you will want to know how to manage as toddlers and caregivers come and go. It is good to have a plan worked out in advance for dividing the room into the areas or activities. Then each caregiver can have specific duties and supervise specific areas.

Visitors help Instead of taking toddlers away from the center on field trips, invite visitors into the room. Firefighters, military police, clowns, musicians, and health workers all make interesting visitors.

Daily chart An easy check-in and check-out system is necessary to keep track of the toddlers as they come and go. One such system is described on the next page.

KEEP TRACK OF THE TODDLERS AS THEY COME AND GO

In a center which provides drop-in care, each room needs an easy method to keep track of the children. The *official* entry and exit records usually are kept elsewhere in the center. Fees are charged there. Health cards and emergency phone numbers are maintained there. But it is important for you to have a system *in your own room* for keeping track of the toddlers as they come and go. A room chart serves as communication between arriving and departing parents and caregivers.

Chart each name, the time in, the parent's expected return time and the following:

Description/clothing Toddlers may pull name tags off each other. You even may find a child you know with another's name tag. For quick identification of children new to you or for new caregivers, jot down special colors or types of clothing.

Toileting Use this special space to indicate if the child is wearing diapers or uses the toilet or potty independently. Above the slanted line a "D" means diapers and "I" means independent. Below the line you can keep track of each potty time. Using different colors for each check is helpful.

Feeding A code, "B" for breakfast, "L" for lunch and "D" for dinner, tells at a glance which center-prepared meals the children will eat. An "S" indicates a sack meal from home. A caregiver can make special notes about what and how the child ate in the space to the right.

Sleeping All toddlers nap unless a parent requests otherwise or plans to pick up the toddler before nap time. An "O" shows this in the nap column.

Remarks This column is for communication between parents and caregivers. A parent may request results of toileting. Or a parent may report a toddler's special allergies. A caregiver may want to note a toddler's special accomplishment or a difficult moment experienced that day.

Below is a sample daily chart used in a toddler room in a military child care center where many children are cared for on a drop-in basis. The chart is designed both to keep track of the changing enrollment and to be reusable. The chart is covered with clear plastic and marked with a washable pen or wax pencil. As each child arrives, a caregiver enters a name and the other information. This is erased as each child leaves the room.

A SAMPLE DAILY CHART FOR A TODDLER ROOM

#	Toddler's Name	Time In	Description Clothing	Toileting	Feeding		Sleeping		Expected Return	Remarks
					Meals	Ate Well	Nap	Slept Well		
1	Samara Best	0730	very curly blonde hair	I	B+L	B☺ L☺	✓		1630	Mom says missing father
2	Brad Masters		eye glasses	D ///	L	L☺	✓		1400	☺ child new puzzle today!
3	Star Grant	0815	red t-shirt	D ///	L	L☺	0		1200	watch diaper rash
4	Su Lee	0815	orange jumpsuit	D ///	L	L☺	0		1200	
5	David Pawlowski	0830	brown hair green outfit	I	L	L☺	✓		1430	

Parents often base their opinion of the center on what they see and hear during the few minutes when they are dropping off or picking up a child. So how caregivers set up the receiving area and manage the entry and exit routines is particularly important.

The safety of your toddlers is a major concern. Arrange the play areas so that you can see into all corners. Indoors, check the thermostat and open windows for fresh air as needed. Toddlers need child-sized sinks to wash their hands after toileting. Any faucet a toddler can reach should not have scalding hot water. Caregivers need an adult-height sink to use after each diaper change. There should be a planned inspection of equipment each week. Remove broken toys. Watch for hazards like loose bolts and frayed ropes. Make sure all doors and gates are secure so that toddlers stay where they are safe. All caregivers should have first-aid training. Safety manuals should be within easy reach for quick reference. *Basic First Aid* by the American Red Cross is good. *A Sigh Of Relief* by M. I. Green has pictures and simple steps to follow for treating all kinds of emergencies. Wipe all spills and keep the floor very clean. Follow your center's regulations for washing and disinfecting toys.

Here are some health and safety tips:

Know and post emergency procedures. Be familiar with and post emergency procedures such as fire drills in plain sight. Post "communicable disease" charts in clear view of both parents and caregivers. Caregivers should know how to operate fire extinguishers.

Keep some things in locked places. Toddlers can move fast and climb high. Cleaning products, medications and employees' belongings should be stored in locked cabinets or in another room.

Watch those little fingers. Place protective coverings over any electrical outlets. Make sure toddlers cannot reach or pull any electrical cords.

Choose toys wisely. Toddlers like small toys. But avoid tiny objects like marbles, which can be swallowed easily. Avoid using toothpicks for creative art activities. Large, strong toys without sharp edges or moving parts are the safest. Store toys on shelves or in trays or boxes. Toy chests with lift-type lids are dangerous.

REDUCE THE RISKS FOR TODDLERS AT PLAY

Even after all precautions have been taken to provide a safe indoor and outdoor environment for toddlers, you cannot assume the toddlers will be perfectly safe. Toddlers can run fast and climb high. This calls for close supervision of their play. As suggested elsewhere, it is most effective when caregivers make and follow a plan for watching specific areas. Caregivers should plan to give the most attention to any area or activity with an element of risk.

Here are some points to remember while watching toddlers play:

Running Toddlers are learning to run fast, but they can't always turn or stop when they must. They can run into walls, furniture and each other. It helps to keep floors and play yards as clear of toys as possible to avoid tripping or accidents. High-gloss floor wax can be a hazard. Keep your eye on toddlers who are running and remind them to slow down or stop as needed for their safety.

Climbing Toddlers will climb anything they can, including chairs, tables and shelves. Be alert at all times. Never assume an open shelf, just because it is high, is out of a toddler's reach. Supervise climbing equipment very closely. Stand right beside slides or climbers while they are in use. Always be sure climbing equipment is over a soft surface. Have the rule that children may not climb with anything in their hands.

Using things in a different way Toddlers may turn chairs over and crawl over the legs. They may try to walk up the slide. You must decide how great the element of danger is in using furniture, toys or equipment in new ways. You also must be consistent. If it is acceptable today to climb up the slide, toddlers will want to do the same thing tomorrow.

Dressing safely See that your toddlers are dressed safely for play. Scarves, ponchos or loose clothes may be dangerous. When children are climbing, mittens or gloves make it hard for them to hold on securely.

CHECK YOUR TODDLER AREA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about how your toddler environment is managed. Think about ways to improve the management of your room for any items you do not check.

____ regular schedule for routines and activities

___ in written form ___ posted in clear view

____ caregivers regularly make plans for toddlers

___ in written form ___ posted in clear view

____ a caregiver greets every parent and toddler

___ whoever is free ___ a specific caregiver

____ communication with parents is planned for

___ records/charts ___ report forms ___ bulletin board

____ responsibility for communication with parents is clear

___ whoever is free ___ duties written

____ routines for drop-in care are clear

___ attendance ___ name tags ___ supervising plans

____ regular time for snacks and meals

___ procedures written ___ each caregiver has specific duties

____ regular routines for toileting and diapering

___ plans written ___ routine posted in toileting area

___ daily toileting records kept

____ plans to include toddlers in caring for the environment

___ plans written ___ note made of which children help and what they do

____ caregivers regularly conduct safety checks

___ emergency procedures posted ___ drills conducted

___ cleaning supplies locked ___ hazards and broken toys removed

___ floors and play areas clear

SUPPORTING AND RESPECTING DIFFERENCES

HELP TODDLERS LIKE THEMSELVES

You can create an environment which will help toddlers like themselves. This happens when toddlers feel successful. This may come from hopping on one foot, putting a large puzzle together or painting a picture. For the most part, you plan the environment and then stand back. You see that there are blocks, toys, climbing equipment, balls, water play, paint, sand and the like for the toddlers to explore. Each child will make personal discoveries about himself and his world. You can help the child with positive statements, not judgments. "I see how carefully you stacked those blocks so they wouldn't fall." Remember, the more a toddler can find to do on his own, the more successful the child will feel and the more successful you should feel as a caregiver. Caregivers help best when they show that they like each child. Each child should be respected as a person - not for what that child can do.

You can plan the environment to provide toddlers with ways to get to know and like themselves:

Mirrors It is nice to have both shatter-proof full-length and hand mirrors in your room. Full-length mirrors for toddlers are best when mounted as near the floor as possible. Use the mirror to make sure the toddler understands that what she sees is her image. Touch her while saying, "I am touching your hair. Your nose." Have the toddler look in the mirror when something is unusual. "See your new coat in the mirror." Or say, "Look at your face in the mirror. See the paint."

Artwork Write the child's name on artwork and display it in the room to give the toddler a sense of importance.

Photos Take photographs of the group and individual toddlers. Put these on the wall at the children's eye level so they can find and look at pictures of themselves.

Success Equipment, materials, toys and activities that can be used successfully by the toddlers help them learn, grow and feel good about themselves.

BE SENSITIVE TO MILITARY LIFE-STYLES

Toddlers who are a part of families in the military are affected by that life-style. These toddlers with service-member parents may live away from close relatives, especially grandparents. They may move frequently. They may be separated from a parent on duty. They are exposed to a wide range of cultural differences. They may have to face the death of a parent. Toddlers may not be able to talk about some events in their lives, but that does not mean that they are not affected. The child care center on a military installation can be an important family and child support service. The center environment should welcome the toddlers and make them feel comfortable. This can help them adjust to the special demands of military life.

Consider the needs of toddlers in a military child care center:

Grandparent substitutes Find elderly people to visit the center. They can read stories, talk to the toddlers or provide a "rocking" lap. This especially is nice for toddlers separated from their grandparents.

Another language A child in your care in a military child care center may be used to hearing a language different from yours. In that case find someone who can visit often and use that familiar language with that child. Do not worry. A child usually will learn to speak a new language with less difficulty than an adult.

Special dress-up clothes Look for someone to scale down military uniforms for the toddlers to use for dress-up. With these they can pretend to be mothers or fathers going off to work.

Soft places A cushion or a bean bag chair makes a nice place to sit and watch others for a short time while adjusting to the center environment. An adult in a rocking chair can offer comfort to an upset child.

CONSIDER ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND LIFE-STYLE DIFFERENCES

A toddler is learning about her culture and forming her view of life as much as she is learning to run, jump, climb and talk. For this reason give some thought to the toys, books, finger games and songs you use. Everything in the environment will have some effect upon the toddler's developing thoughts and way of looking at life. What a toddler sees and hears, what she plays and who she plays with will all blend together and become a part of her make-up as she grows through childhood into adulthood. The easiest way for the toddler to learn about different cultures, life-styles and views is to play with children and caregivers from different family backgrounds. Toddlers should see, hear and experience familiar things so they feel comfortable, as well as have opportunities to learn from new and different experiences.

Try to include a different view of things.

Caregivers Daily contact with adults with different family backgrounds is the most natural way to teach about differences. If your culture is different from that of any of your toddlers, you can, for example, share songs and rhymes from your own childhood with them.

Male caregivers A male caregiver is a nice addition to the toddler environment. It is important, however, that males and females share all duties, activities and play equally with the toddlers. Male caregivers can clean up messes and show tenderness, just as females can play actively with toddlers.

Toys and games Encourage *all* toddlers - both boys and girls - to play with *all* toys and games. Encourage parents to bring *all* toddlers comfortably dressed for active play.

Multi-ethnic dolls, puppets and props Choose dolls, puppets and dress-up clothes to reflect different ethnic groups.

Books and pictures Use books and pictures that show children from a variety of ethnic groups and families. Photographs of the children in your center can be used to make up for books which do not show a variety of cultures or life-styles.

BRING IN PEOPLE AND THINGS FROM THE WORLD OUTSIDE

Add interest and variety to your toddlers' environment by inviting other people into your room. Alert your visitor to the habits of toddlers. It may work best if your visitor just sits in one spot while the children come and go. If you put the toddlers in a group, warn your visitor that it is likely that a child or two may wander away after a short while. The best kinds of visitors will have something to show, an instrument to play or truly be interested in just sitting and talking to toddlers. Exposing toddlers to a variety of adults and ideas makes the *new* and *different* seem interesting instead of strange.

Some people that you may want to add to your toddler environment include:

Infants Toddlers like to get a good close look at babies. It is nice if a parent will hold an infant and talk to the curious toddlers for a few minutes from time to time.

Animals Any visitor with soft, furry animals the toddlers can touch is sure to make a big hit. You may find willing visitors at nearby game farms, the local humane society, pet stores or the zoo.

Uniforms and costumes Workers who wear uniforms are popular with toddlers - health workers, fire-fighters, or military police. Clowns are fun visitors. A parent with a different cultural background may visit wearing native clothing. Look for adults who are gentle toward and understanding of the little people in your room.

Musicians A singer who plays an instrument can entertain and lead a sing-a-long, playing simple tunes the children know. A toddler may be allowed to carefully touch a visitor's instrument.

Volunteers Some school-age children can be very kind and helpful. They can visit on a regular or occasional basis, playing games like "The Mulberry Bush" or building blocks with the toddlers. Toddlers often find men interesting visitors.

BE PREPARED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ways of caring for children with special needs are changing. More and more, children with one or more handicapping conditions are enrolling in regular child care programs. The challenge to caregivers is to overcome their feelings about dealing with a new experience. With time and practice you will see that children with special needs are like all children. They need to be physically comfortable, feel loved and secure and have opportunities to play that help the body and mind to grow and develop. The needs of these children are no different from other children. The toys and equipment regularly found in a well-equipped center usually are adequate or easily adapted to their needs. These children are not so different; they just need *more*. They need more time to learn and practice skills; they need more praise and encouragement to gain the skills typical for their age group.

Plans for toddlers with special needs often require only slight changes in regular routines.

Modify toys. Regular toys can be modified or changed to suit a special need. For example, a child may be repeatedly confused by stacking rings. Simplify the game by removing every other ring.

Set goals and keep records. Your director, an occupational therapist, special teacher or parent may help you set goals. Charts or records help you and the parents see that progress is being made to meet the goals. The best goals are in easy steps. The goal "to get Chad to talk" is too hard. Make the first step "to get Chad to point at a toy."

Make slight changes in the environment. Slight adjustments in the environment may make the time that a child with special needs spends in your center easier and more enjoyable for all. A quiet, private space for play may help an overactive child. Keeping the room arrangement the same helps the child with poor eyesight. Children who have difficulty standing alone can crawl into cubes or barrels without tops. Once standing, they can hang on to the edges and watch others from this new, upright point of view.

MIXED-AGE GROUPINGS OFFER ENVIRONMENTS FOR LEARNING

This book describes environments, materials and routines to use with toddlers. But there are advantages to consider in caring for children of different ages in the same group. To some degree, what is called mixed-age or cross-age care may happen already in your center. First thing in the morning and late in the day - those times when attendance is down - many centers mix the ages of children in one group. In those centers which separate their drop-in care from their full-time child care programs, often children of different ages are cared for in one group in the drop-in program. At present, most centers group children by age or skill level for practical reasons. It appears that more thought and study is needed to design equipment, space arrangements, materials, routines and schedules for use by children of different ages in the same group. So while this book describes environments for toddlers, we do not want you to overlook thinking about the benefits of mixed-age group care for children.

Below are some of the benefits of caring for children of different ages in the same group:

The younger children learn from the older. By watching and imitating the older children, the young learn new skills and ways to play; new words and ways to think; and new behaviors and how to get along with other people. The young child can see what lies ahead.

The older children learn from the younger. When older children are around younger children they learn patience. It often makes an older child feel good to help a younger child. While helping or teaching, the older child is reminded of what he knows and can do. The older child also can see what it was like being a younger child.

Mixed-age groups are good for children from small families. A single child or a child with just one brother or sister nearly the same age can learn a lot being in a group of children of different ages. So with the trend toward smaller families, a child in a group with a mixture of ages can have experiences with older or younger children not otherwise possible. In this world we must get along with a wide age span - not just our own age. Being part of a mixed-age group is good preparation for life.

THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR

What does an adult do in a room of toddlers in a child care center all day? That varies according to the center and the adult. The point is that whatever a caregiver does in a child care center, young children need adults for direction, attention and approval. Toddlers learn how to behave by watching the people, especially adults, around them. If they are treated with kindness, their behavior usually will reflect that. If they hear harsh words or manners, toddlers are likely to copy them as well. Studies of child care centers have found that caregivers behave in different ways with young children. Some behaviors help toddlers towards healthy development more than others.

Most caregiver behavior includes some of the following qualities:

Encouraging The caregiver encourages toddlers in their selection of toys and play. The caregiver uses words and short sentences to name things. This helps them understand more about the things and people in their world.

Guiding This involves helping the children through a period of play, toileting or diaper changes, meals or naps. Some caregivers may guide more directly and firmly than others. In either case this means getting through the routines in a positive way without much conflict.

Restricting The caregiver makes it clear to the children that there are definite rules, like wastebaskets that are off limits.

Neutral The caregiver neither encourages, manages or restricts. The caregiver may or may not talk to the children. There is no attempt to encourage, guide or restrict while getting the children through the daily schedule.

How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as one who "teaches"? Are you the one who makes and enforces rules? Or do you see yourself as an advisor and supervisor? Are you the grown-up who is there to help when needed and to offer information and conversation?

CHECK THE WAYS YOU SUPPORT DIFFERENCES

Use the checklist below to help you look at how you plan and arrange the environment to support and encourage differences.

You can tell if you are supporting and encouraging differences if you can think of a child for whom you've planned:

____ experiences to fit a special interest in dancing, blowing bubbles or the like

____ a new activity or way to help a child who has a particular need to learn a new skill or develop muscles through play

____ adjustments in routines to allow for a "down" day

You can tell if you respect each child if you:

____ like each child for what he or she is instead of what he or she can do

____ expect each child to progress from one stage to the next instead of comparing one child to another

____ overlook those things which you may not like, such as children who whine or who have dirty hands and faces

____ accept a child's need to show anger

____ plan the center environment to include things like mirrors

____ do not judge the child who cannot control feelings of anger

You can tell if you encourage differences if you:

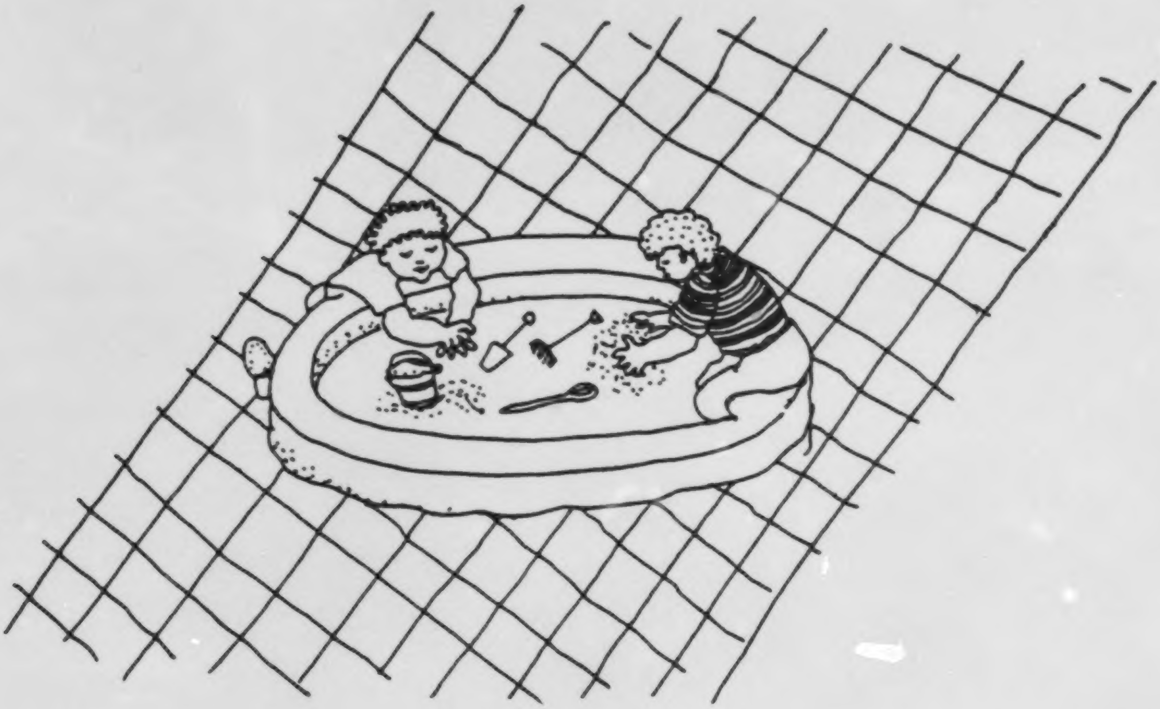
____ know about each child's family - brothers and sisters, single parents, grandparents

____ know which children have another culture and language, or have lived in other countries

____ include books and pictures and plan experiences to reflect a variety of cultures and life-styles

____ know which holidays are important in each child's home and how they are celebrated

ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PLAY



Toddlers can walk, talk, eat solid foods and are learning to toilet themselves. And it is through *doing* and *playing* that the body, mind and emotions grow and develop. Social development is also learned from play experiences. Toddlers must play. Usually they will find or make their own play. Sometimes adults can lead the children to explore and discover. As a caregiver you can arrange the environment to include a variety of experiences. The trick is to know and understand toddlers. Then you can plan a safe environment for play and activities at different levels of difficulty.

The tips below may help you supervise toddlers:

Toddlers are learning language rapidly. You can help by talking, listening, questioning and answering their questions. Be patient and be prepared for some to practice this new skill by talking - nonstop.

Toddlers must do to learn. Let these children help as much as possible. Let them help make the play dough as well as play with it. Let them help sponge up spills.

Toddlers need real objects to learn. These young children rely on their senses to learn. The more real objects they can come in contact with the better. Once familiar with a real object, they can understand pictures. Their ability to form mental images or pictures is just beginning. When you talk about a rabbit, have the real thing or a picture. You cannot rely on a toddler to have a memory of a rabbit seen earlier. Another example is to talk about snow when it is snowing, not on a sunny day.

Toddlers more often play alone. Toddlers usually play alone. Even in a group toddlers more often play side by side than with each other. Older toddlers may play together for short periods of time. They might build blocks or act out familiar routines like eating or sleeping.

Toddlers like the familiar. Young children like to sing the same songs again, hear a story over and over again or put together the same puzzle more than once. Allow for lots of repetition.

KNOW WHAT SKILLS TO EXPECT FROM A TODDLER

Below are some of the different skills you can expect to see in toddlers. **Remember:** *EACH CHILD GROWS AT HIS OR HER OWN RATE.* The items listed below are averages or norms, not rules for each stage of development.

At 25 months the toddler:	At 36 months the toddler:
ACTIVE PLAY	
____ cannot stand on one foot	____ can stand on one foot
____ jumps with both feet together	____ hops on one foot
____ walks up and down stairs, leading with one foot	____ walks up and down stairs, alternating feet
____ rides kiddie car	____ rides trike
____ walks slightly bent forward	____ walks erect
____ gets up from sitting on floor by pushing bottom up first	____ gets up from sitting on floor with upper body erect
FINGER AND HAND SKILLS	
____ "scrubs" back and forth when painting	____ paints single strokes, dots and circles
____ may still hold crayon in fist	____ holds crayons in fingers rather than fist
____ is learning to turn pages in a book one at a time	____ turns pages in a book one at a time
____ scribbles, using whole arm	____ scribbles and draws, may even name pictures
____ draws a line from top of paper to bottom	____ can draw line from left to right and circles
____ works one-piece puzzles	____ can manage four-piece puzzle
SELF-HELP SKILLS	
____ has little or no bladder or bowel control	____ has daytime bladder and bowel control
____ takes off clothes - hats, shoes, socks, coats, etc.	____ takes coat off and puts it on
____ needs help with handwashing	____ tries to wash and dry own hands
____ spills some when using spoon	____ uses spoon without spilling

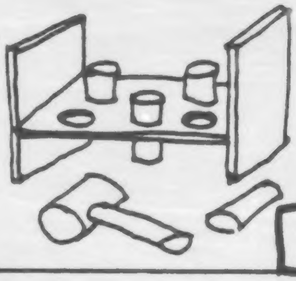
25 months	36 months
SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS	
____ shows interest in *things*	____ shows more interest in *people*
____ plays alone	____ plays beside others; sometimes plays with others; likes simple group activities
____ does not share; picks up, holds and carries things around	____ is beginning to see that it is fun to share and play with others
____ carries blocks around or puts them in vehicles and moves them around; some building of towers and lines	____ builds simple towers or structures, may name them like "bed" or "bridge"
____ fills and empties containers with sand and water	____ adds "pretend" element to sand and water play
____ needs objects like a toy telephone for pretend play	____ can use a block as a "pretend" telephone
____ likes action toys like trains, cars and telephones	____ likes to combine toys, such as making roads with blocks or in the sandbox for cars
LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS	
____ is just beginning to put two or three words together	____ uses simple sentences
____ is sometimes difficult to understand	____ is understandable most of the time
____ practices words while playing	____ uses words to play or "act out" while playing
____ understands and uses "no"	____ wants to please and asks, "Is that right?"
____ learns words and how to use them	____ listens for meaning and direction in the words of others
____ sings phrases of songs	____ may sing entire short song
____ only talks about what is in sight	____ is able to talk about things out of sight

On the average, *a child is physically able to control his or her bladder and bowels at 30 months. This means one toddler may be ready to learn toileting skills at 24 months and another not until 36 months.*

MATCH TODDLER'S SKILLS WITH THE TOYS YOU CHOOSE

Here are some toys and activities you might choose to use with toddlers. In each row, put an X in the box below the one you feel would be most appropriate to use with a toddler. Of course, you always will find a wide range of abilities in every group, but select the one thing which is generally the best for toddlers. Compare your choices with ours on the next page.

1.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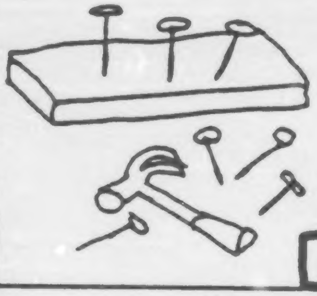
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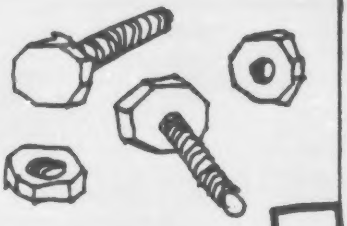
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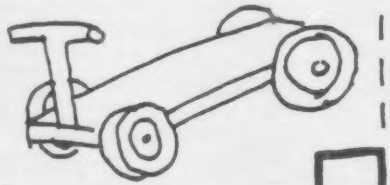
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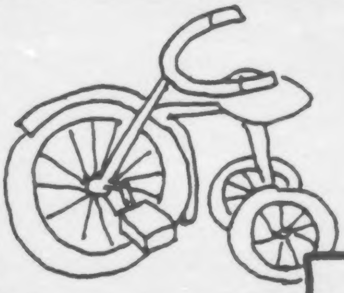
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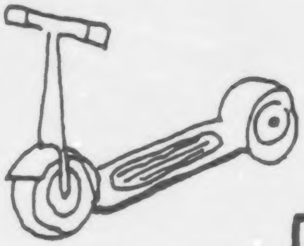
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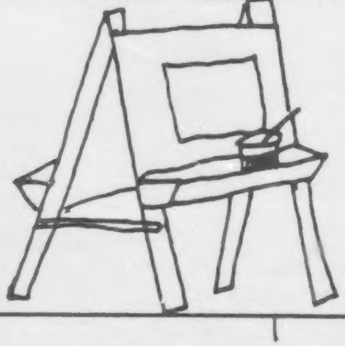
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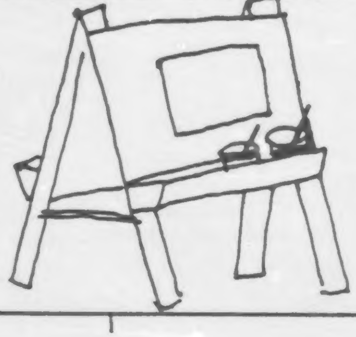
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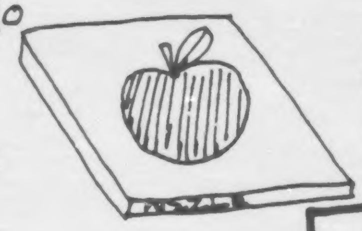
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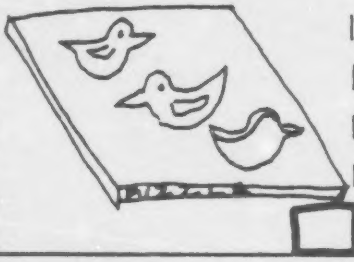
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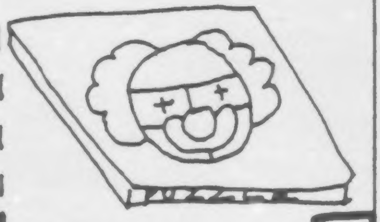
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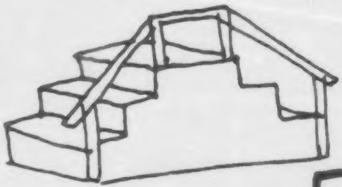
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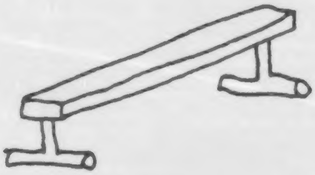
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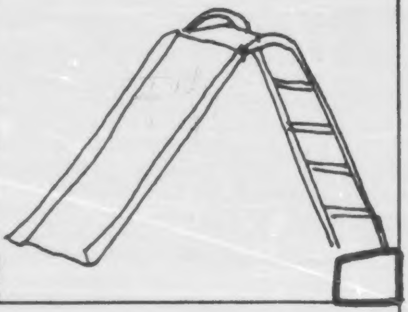
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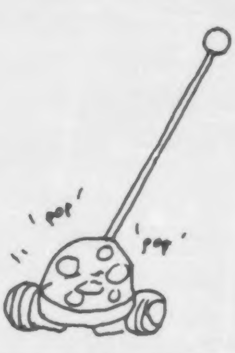

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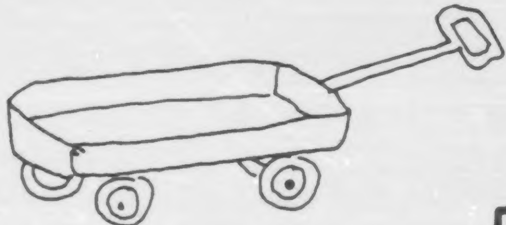
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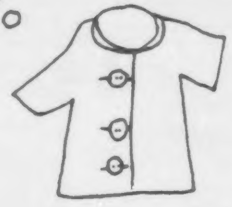
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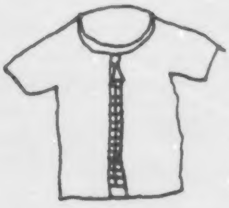
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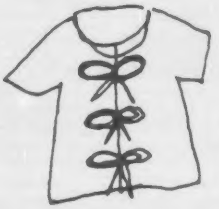
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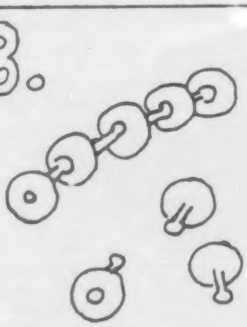
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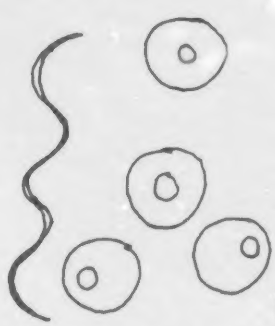
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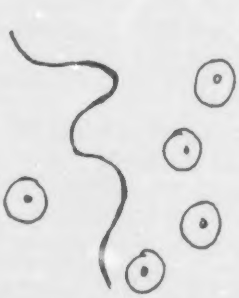
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Compare your choices with ours. We based our choices on the experiences of caregivers who have worked with groups of toddlers. Remember, the skills and interests of toddlers vary. Our choices may not be the best for *every* toddler you know.

1. *A pegboard* is safe fun for a toddler. Nails and hammers, unless supervised very closely, are dangerous for a group of toddlers. Putting nuts on bolts requires advanced, small-muscle skills and is more fun for older children.

2. *A trike* is great fun for toddlers. One to two year olds like kiddie cars and older children have the more developed skills needed for riding scooters.

3. *One can of paint* is enough. Painting with one color is fun. A second color only adds confusion for the toddler, as well as doubling the quantity of the paint that can be spilled.

4. *A three- or four-piece puzzle*, with each piece being an identifiable item is a good puzzle for toddlers. Of course *toddlers' skills with puzzles will vary widely*. The one-piece puzzle is more appropriate for younger children. The more complicated would be better for older children.

5. *Climbing and sliding* are good activities for toddlers who are outgrowing the desire they had earlier to walk up and down stairs. Save the narrow balance beam for older children.

6. *A wagon* suits the older toddler better than the push-pull toy loved by the children just learning to walk.

7. *Buttons* are a fun challenge for most toddlers who already have learned to zip and unzip. Of course, for some toddlers it still is a hard task to get the zipper started without help. So if you chose the zipper, consider that an equally satisfactory answer. Tying bows is an advanced skill for older, more skilled fingers.

8. *Stringing large wooden beads* would be the best choice for toddlers. Pop beads are good for younger children and small beads to string are better for older children.

Take note when a toddler who normally plays well begins to throw or misuse things. Unless the toddler is ill or otherwise upset, that behavior may be telling you the toy is too easy and boring or too hard and frustrating. You can best help by suggesting another activity for the toddler to do.

KNOW THE BEST TIMES TO HELP TODDLERS LEARN

Toddlers have so much to learn. As a caregiver you may wonder how you can best help them. Besides planning an interesting, varied environment, you can be alert to the best times to help toddlers learn. A simple rule of thumb to follow is to take advantage of the times they ask questions. When a child has asked a question, the child will pay more attention and understand what you have to say at that moment than at any other time. No matter what the question, use it as an opportunity to help the toddler learn about such things as color, size, shapes, letters, numbers, sounds and uses of things. You can arrange the environment to increase the number of questions. Hang a few toys up or put some toys out of the toddlers' reach. They will learn to ask to play with these toys.

The caregiver who pays attention to toddlers when they ask questions can use that as a time to teach new information:

Number If a child asks for a cracker, take the opportunity to teach numbers. Say, "Why, yes, Marsha, you may have two crackers. Here you are. One, two."

Size A child asks for a ball. Say, "You want a ball? Would you like a *big* ball or a *little* ball?" If the child cannot answer, say, "Show me which ball." When the child points to the big ball, say, "Oh, you want the big ball."

Color A child who has new shoes probably will be proud and show you. You can say, "Bret, I see you have new brown shoes. How nice. Oh, look, Alice has brown shoes, too."

Sounds Put up pictures or use books with pictures of familiar animals or vehicles. If a toddler points and asks, "What's that?" give the name and the sound it makes. Say, "That's a jet. It goes *vrroom*." "That's a cow. It goes *moo-oo*."

Questions Practice answering a question with another question. A toddler may point to a picture and ask, "What's that." Give the answer and then ask, "What else do you see?"

KNOW WHAT HOLDS THEIR ATTENTION

Toddlers are very curious. They still are busy exploring and learning about their world. They are constantly on the move.. A toddler may play with one toy for a few minutes. Then she sees or hears something interesting; she is off to investigate. Adults can do two things to help toddlers stick with one thing longer. First, caregivers can be very careful not to interrupt a toddler who is concentrating on a task, such as working a puzzle or putting on a shoe. Unless asked for help, adults should not intervene. Second, caregivers can provide things which toddlers really like and tend to stay with for longer periods of time. Watch your toddlers. Some children will concentrate longer than others. Some common activities that toddlers like which promote a longer attention span include water play, sand, play dough and climbing and sliding toys.

Here are some activities to help your toddlers stay with one thing for longer periods of time:

Water play Use a water table or large tub so you can have water play both inside and outside. Besides waterproof aprons, have floating toys, corks, cups, small pitchers and funnels for the children. You may want to add a few drops of food color and soap suds to the water.

Sand table Sand can be used both inside and out. Provide different toys, spoons and small containers for play. Using water adds interest.

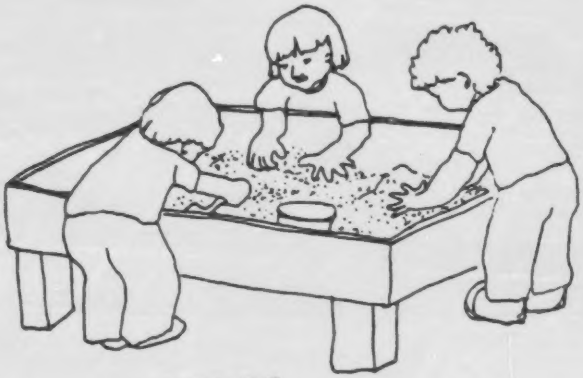
Play dough You can make your own play dough and set it out often for the toddlers. See page 108 for recipe. Toddlers can use just their hands to shape and mold the dough. Sometimes give them rolling pins and cookie cutters to play with also.

Climbing and sliding toys Toddlers can enjoy climbing and sliding indoors, as well as outdoors. If you have portable equipment, consider moving it in or out to suit your needs.

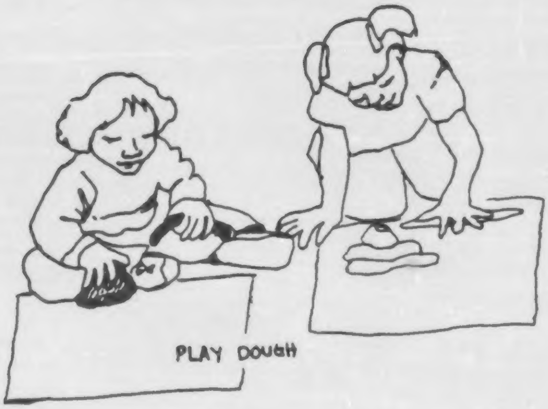
Some centers use cornmeal in place of sand for indoor play. Toddlers like to sift, pour and play with cornmeal. It is safe to eat and not as harmful if it gets in children's eyes. However, be aware that some people object to using food for purposes other than eating.

PICK THINGS THAT KEEP

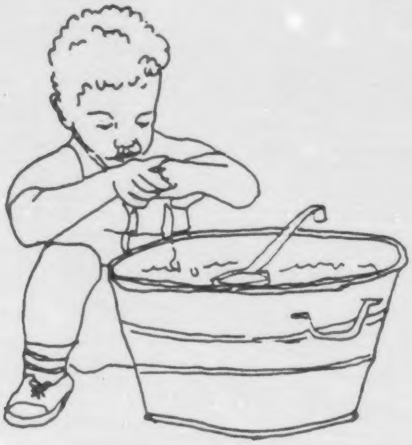
THEIR INTEREST . . .



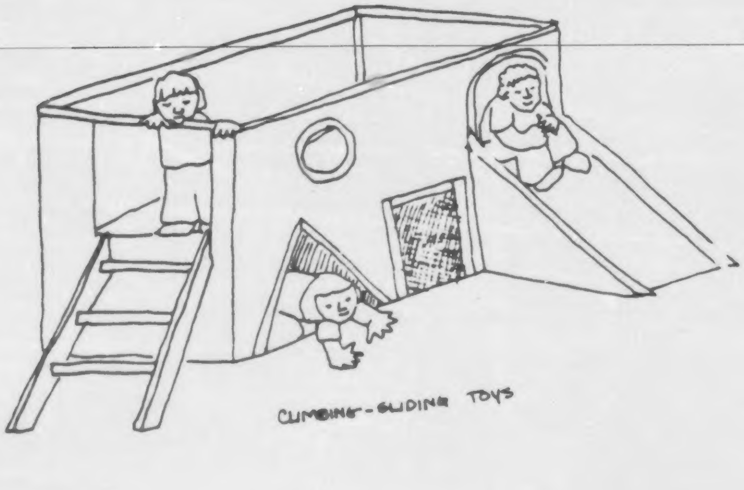
SAND TABLE



PLAY DOUGH



WATER PLAY



CLIMBING-SLIDING TOYS

You will be able to have group activities with toddlers, but remember, *keep the groups small and the time short*. Generally, let your toddlers have free time to find and choose their own play. Sometimes small group activities may just happen. One child may want to play "Ring-around-the-Rosie" and several others will join in. One child may want to hear a record and dance and others may begin dancing also. One may ask you to read a book and several others may snuggle up to hear, too. Small group activities allow for touch and direct eye contact - adult approval which helps the toddler feel secure and happy. With a small group you can listen and talk to each child and do much to help the child learn language. Activities provide new experiences and new words for toddlers to learn. It may take you an hour to plan and prepare an activity which the toddler completes in five minutes. But the benefits of short, small group activities are such that you will want to plan them daily.

To plan for toddlers, remember these points:

Allow for close supervision. The caregiver leading a small group activity should have only a few toddlers and the activity to supervise. Plan for the other caregivers in the room to watch the larger group.

Allow for most to participate. You may spend an hour directing one activity like drawing with chalk. Toddlers will come and go for a few minutes each until all - or nearly all - in the room have participated.

Allow for choice. No matter how much you like the activity you have planned, expect that some days some toddlers may not be interested in joining you.

Allow for different levels of skill. Younger, less-experienced toddlers will talk less and use their hands and fingers with less skill.

Allow for growth and learning. Toddlers like to learn and do new things, as well as repeat their favorite activities.

PLAN A VARIETY OF SIMPLE ACTIVITIES

Below are some suggestions for a variety of activities. Simple items can be used in different, fun ways. All it takes is a little imagination and a sense of enjoyment.

Activity	What to use	Helpful hints
making music	drums, paper towel cylinders, tambourines	Toddlers can sit or "dance" while experimenting with sound.
playing tea party restaurant	dishes, child-sized table and chair or menus and pizza tins	Plastic food or pictures of food add a fun element.
cooking	low table, ingredients for simple food and spoons for tasting	Toddlers like to dump, stir and use eggbeaters and cookie cutters.
pasting shapes	precut colored shapes, paste and paper (recycled is best)	Make shapes large - two inches at least. Make your own thick paste with flour and water.
pouring water	two small pitchers, basin or tub, child-sized table or bench	Let the child stand while pouring from one pitcher to the other. Next let the child pour juice at snack time
sorting by size	large and small baskets and large and small blocks	The child puts the large blocks in the large basket and the small blocks in the small basket. For variety use balls or toys.
using a flashlight	flashlight and darken the room	Toddler shines light on objects around the room and everybody talks about what they see.

Toddlers can learn and practice self-help skills. They can help with many daily routines. Each day, caregivers can help toddlers do more for themselves. It is best when caregivers encourage, but do not force, a child to try new tasks or learn new skills. Adults do not need to use force. They can make it fun for toddlers to help. Putting the toys away can be a game. Toddlers can drive the trucks to the shelf. They can put the dolls in their beds. They can share the tasks of dressing and undressing themselves. Once a caregiver has started a zipper, it is easy for a child to pull it the rest of the way. Toddlers have different levels of skill. They vary in their interest in sharing tasks. Their goals may not always be the same as yours. For example, they may be interested in seeing how a sponge works. But, you may want the spill cleaned up in a hurry. Be patient. Plan ways to help toddlers learn to care for themselves and their environment.

Here are some ways to involve toddlers in the routines of each day:

Snacks and mealtimes Toddlers can help set tables or arrange chairs. When food is being prepared in the room, they enjoy adding ingredients or helping you stir. After everyone has eaten, the children can help you clear and wipe the tables or hold the dustpan.

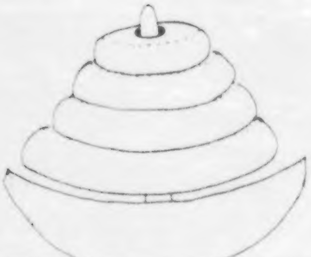
Nap time Before naps toddlers can help you set out the cots or mats and blankets for naps. After naps they can help you pick up the cots and blankets.

Cleaning Toddlers can help dust shelves and wipe mirrors. With careful supervision, they can help run the vacuum cleaner. If your center closes in the late afternoon, you can start these chores after parents have called for many of the children. With a small number of toddlers, you can relax and enjoy the pace of their help and still complete your daily tasks. Always encourage the children to help clean up their own spills or after their activities.

Caring for the environment Toddlers can help care for the environment in many ways. They can water plants or help you change pictures and bulletin boards. They can help arrange the toys.

HELP TODDLERS SEE HOW THINGS ARE ALIKE AND DIFFERENT

When toddlers learn to see how things are alike and different, they can sort things and put them in groups. The ability to see how things are alike or different grows more complex with time and experience. At first the toddler can group objects like blocks and balls. The toddler also groups things that are used together like shoes and socks or soap and water. Still later the toddler can see finer differences like color, size and shape. It helps if an adult shows and talks about differences. Then toddlers can learn qualities like *soft* and *hard*, *round* and *square* or *rough* and *smooth*. Toddlers need lots of experiences with real objects. It will be a while before they will talk about and use the words to describe these experiences. Toddlers learn to sort and group after lots of practice with things in their environment which they can see, touch, taste, smell or hear. As a caregiver, you can look for ways to provide sorting and grouping experiences. Some of these can be a part of regular routines. After lunch the toddlers can put their dirty dishes here, their spoons there. Also, you can plan and use special sorting activities with the children.



Show how things are alike and different:

Sort everyday things in the environment. As the toddlers in your room help put toys away, they can learn about sorting. Say, "Put the balls in the box. Put the blocks on the shelf."

Compare and match objects by size. Use words like, "This is a big block. Let's put the big blocks on this shelf." "This is a little block. Can you find one like it?"

Compare objects by color. Say, "I have a red block. Let's put away all the red blocks first."

Provide toys that arrange by size. Both nesting blocks and stacking rings help children arrange objects by size.

Plan ways to show qualities. You can make up ways to play with toddlers to show qualities like *hard* and *soft*. Collect a few objects on a tray. Ask the child to put the soft things on a soft pillow, the hard things on a tile or tray - any hard surface. A cotton ball, tissue and knit mitten are soft. A comb, key and pencil are hard.

Toddlers are ready to begin to learn to count. Both counting and other math experiences can be a natural and casual part of each day. You can ask the two year old to bring *one* more chair to the snack table. Body parts are fun and easy to use for counting. The children copy you as you point to your nose and say, "One nose." Then point to your mouth, "One mouth." Point to your eyes, "One, two eyes." Always use objects to count. Common objects are fingers, crackers, balls or chairs. You and a child can point to and count pictures in a book. Counting songs and finger plays are fun to use. Counting is simple and fun to do with toddlers. Do not overlook the important, basic ideas that toddlers can begin to experience and learn. These include learning things like the meaning of *more than* and *less than*.

Here are some easy, fun ways to help your toddlers learn some basic ideas:

Show the meaning of "more than." Begin with simple differences. Often you can talk about events to point out *more than* or *less than*. You can say, "Oh look. That doll has two blankets. This one has one. That doll has more than this one."

Compare to show differences. You can set up and play simple games with toys. You can make a set of three objects. Use two blocks and a ball. Ask a toddler, "Which one is different?" If the toddler can't answer, say, "This ball is different." Try this game again later.

Show the one-to-one relationship. One-to-one means one apple slice or one bean bag for each child. A child can learn this while putting one napkin by each chair before lunch. Or a child can help you put one blanket on each cot for rest time. A child who puts one peg in each hole of a pegboard is learning about the one-to-one relationship.

THINK OF WAYS FOR TODDLERS TO LEARN NEW WORDS

At 25 months a child may understand 250 to 300 words and speak with two- or three-word phrases. At 36 months that same child may know 750 to 1000 words and use three-or four-word sentences. So you can see learning new words and speech patterns is a major accomplishment for the toddler. As a caregiver you cannot force a toddler to talk, but you can do much to help that toddler along. You help best when you ask questions and wait for answers to questions. Allowing toddlers to hear and practice language is more effective than correcting their speech. Adults can help toddlers learn language by adding to what a child says. This helps the child learn new words and common phrases. For example, the child points and says, "Dog." The adult can add, "Yes, I see the dog, too. That's a big, black dog." Pause to let the child say more. Then continue. "The dog is running very fast." Avoid "babytalk" on the one hand or long lectures and big words on the other.

Here are some easy ways to help the toddlers in your room learn new words:

Use songs and finger games. When toddlers hear songs and finger games often enough, they will learn and use the words they hear. Toddlers can learn parts of the body while enjoying action songs like "My head, my shoulders, my knees, my toes." Chant or make up your own tune.

Display pictures. Large, colorful pictures of familiar objects like animals, plants, vehicles and people give toddlers things to talk about. See page 107 for ideas about a picture file.

Use books. Read books and point to the pictures while you talk about them. Ask simple questions like, "What goes, 'meow'?"

Talk about colors. Toddlers can begin to learn colors. Remember, they can match colors before they can name them. Say, "What a nice blue coat. My pants are blue. Jed's shirt is blue."

Provide puppets, dolls and dress-up clothes. Children will talk to puppets and dolls while they play. Props and dress-up clothes encourage the two-and-a-half to three year old to pretend, which aids speech development.

It is important to observe and keep track of each toddler's development. If a child is in your center full time, he may spend more of his waking hours with you than with his parents. You may have a more accurate view of how toddlers behave and develop than some parents. As a result, you will want a method for observing and keeping track of each toddler's development. Some difficulties, if detected early, can be more easily remedied. If you see a toddler only now and then, you won't have records to check. In any case, if you observe a toddler who has unusual behaviors or cannot perform a number of the usual skills, discuss that child with your director.

One of the items below by itself may not indicate a problem. Two or more of these occurring often may indicate a toddler is in need of special help if he:

Has difficulty hearing does not turn head or move towards loud or unusual sounds; does not come when called by name to snack or favorite activity; pulls on ear;

Has repetitious movements rocks body, claps hands or taps toys or own body for long period of time;

Is physically inactive does not actively walk, run, jump, crawl and explore;

Seems uncomfortable or unhappy often cries often or seems uncomfortable or unhappy more often than comfortable or happy;

Has trouble seeing tilts head or holds head forward; holds toys close to eyes; squints; or rubs eyes often;

Has unusual skin unusual skin color, sores or skin irritations, puffy or red-rimmed eyes;

Seldom tries to talk is nearing three and uses little or no speech or does not play pretend games;

Has social or emotional problems has repeated outbursts of anger, is unusually shy or quiet or cries constantly.

CHECK ON THE OPPORTUNITIES YOU PROVIDE TODDLERS

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about what you know about toddler development and how best to plan the toddler environment. Look for ways to improve opportunities in your center for meaningful play.

In the blank space write the number of times each activity is included in your program. Use 0 - never; 1 - once a week; 2 - two or three times a week; and 3 - daily. Add a plus sign if the activity occurs both indoors and out.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE PLAY

_____ climbing

_____ running

_____ carrying

_____ riding trikes

_____ pushing/pulling wagons, wheelbarrows or doll carriages

_____ dancing, marching and rhythmic games

_____ throwing/bouncing/catching balls

_____ swinging

_____ jumping

_____ sliding

_____ lifting

OPPORTUNITIES FOR USING FINGERS AND HANDS

_____ painting

_____ coloring

_____ molding clay

_____ cutting

_____ drawing

Using:

_____ toys with small pieces

_____ eggbeaters, sifters

_____ pegboards

_____ beads to sort and string

_____ small blocks

_____ clothespins

_____ pounding boards

_____ snap beads or blocks

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN SELF-HELP SKILLS

_____ positive, regular toileting routines

_____ time allowed to practice putting on and taking off clothing

_____ handwashing taught and practiced

(turn page please)

____ snack and mealtime used to practice skills:

  - ____ eating with spoon
  - ____ clearing table
  - ____ pouring liquids
  - ____ setting table
  - ____ wiping spills

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN SOCIAL AND PLAY SKILLS

____ caregivers talk to and praise children while they play beside other children

____ caregiver talk to and praise children while they play with each other

____ caregiver plan small group games

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS

____ caregivers sit or stoop to listen and answer questions

____ caregivers provide speech patterns without demanding a perfect response from toddlers

____ caregivers plan new activities and experiences and talk about:

  - ____ numbers
  - ____ colors
  - ____ parts of the body
  - ____ size and shape
  - ____ words like *rough* and *smooth* or *hard* and *soft*
  - ____ ideas like *in* and *out* or *over* and *soft*

____ caregivers use toy telephones, props, water or block play to start or encourage short pretend play or make-believe games

____ caregivers encourage toddlers to help sort and put away toys and materials

____ caregivers include stacking rings and nesting blocks in play materials

____ caregivers show how beads, blocks and toys can be sorted by color, size or shape

____ caregivers allow time and flexibility for children to finish games and activities

____ caregivers help toddlers learn to pay attention to one thing for longer periods of time by providing things that keep their interest like water play, sand play, play dough and climbing and sliding toys

Remember, writing daily and weekly plans assures that you really do provide a wide variety of experiences for the toddlers in your care.

USING MATERIALS IN CREATIVE WAYS

In this section we suggest some activities and ways to use various materials with toddlers. A good child care program includes a wide range of experiences. The best programs result from planning. This includes planning on both a daily and weekly basis. This ensures that lots of different experiences will be available for the children. It helps if someone else reviews the plans to see if they meet the center goals which have been set. While numbers and letters may be included as a part of each day's activities, these are not the real basis for later successes. The variety of experiences planned for toddlers should help them develop in very basic ways.

Consider these points while planning the various activities and experiences:

Positive self-concept A child who succeeds and feels good about himself wants to explore and discover more about the world and others.

Observation skills To learn new things, a child must be curious and have skills in using all the senses to take in information. Shapes, colors, smells and the like are important clues. Adults can help by pinpointing one thing at a time.

Language skills Language is basic to high level thinking. Every caregiver's responsibility is to learn how young children acquire language and how adults can best help with this process.

Physical strength and coordination It's an old idea that must not be overlooked: "A sound body leads to a sound mind." With toddlers there is a direct connection between movement and learning. They have to be free to twist, turn and try things out. They need challenge without too great a risk to stretch and strengthen their bodies.

A sense of process This refers to a growing understanding of how things will come out. If we pour the juice too fast, the glass will overflow. If we turn the switch, the light comes on. Toddlers gain this sense of process by actually trying things out. An adult can help by offering an explanation at the proper moment.

ENCOURAGE PRETEND PLAY

Toddlers learn, grow and develop their imaginations while having fun pretending. The pretend play of a two year old will be very simple. It may consist of making animal sounds or playing with a doll - patting it and saying, "Sleep, baby." Usually this will last for just a few minutes. You can encourage toddlers to pretend. Toddlers need realistic items to use as a part of their pretend play. Toy food or pictures of food and a few dishes can become a party. Playing with a toy telephone may begin with only a simple "hello" and "good-bye." Longer, more detailed conversations will happen later. You may help start a game with a remark, like, "I see your baby needs a nap." Toddlers can only pretend about real life experiences - something they've seen in their own lives. So pretend play centering around household activities like eating, cleaning and caring for babies will happen most often. Older toddlers may use ideas from things they have seen on TV or favorite books for pretend play. Let the children make up most of their games. Only offer a suggestion now and then.

Some things may encourage pretend play more than others:

Simple props are best. Towels or large scarves can be capes for toddlers or blankets for dolls. A box can be a table or bed for a doll. For dress-up, clothing from older children may fit better than adult clothing.

Suggest pretend play in all areas. Suggest a way to play with boats at the water table. Say, "Toot, toot. Here comes my boat. Let's see what's on shore." Help start a game with trucks in the block area. "You take the blue truck. Maria gets the red one. The trucks can be moving vans. Those blocks are the furniture to move." Caregivers should only help children get started. They should not direct the children's play.

Take pretend play outside. With a blanket for a tent, toddlers can play at camping out. With a firehat, a toddler can use a trike as a fire engine.

Use records and books and songs. Stories and songs about animals can be acted out. Keep it simple. Say, "Let's all be kittens. How do kittens play? Lick their paws? Curl up to sleep?"

SERVE HEALTHFUL SNACKS

When serving snacks think of them as mini-meals for toddlers. Snacks are an important part of a child's total daily food intake. Children need vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to be healthy and happy. The best snacks are those without sugar added. Good snacks include raw vegetables and fruit, whole grain crackers spread with peanut butter or cheese, hard-cooked eggs, and cheese or meat sticks. Natural fruit juices and milk are good drinks. Make sure toddlers drink enough liquids. This is especially important in hot weather and when children may be exposed to colds. Combine snacks and other activities. With a small group, you can read a story or show pictures and talk to the toddlers while they eat. Some centers serve snacks with five or six toddlers sitting on a large drop cloth on the floor. Remember, the chance of a toddler choking on popcorn or nuts makes these undesirable snacks for the two to three year old.

Here are some ideas for healthful snacks for toddlers:

Fruits:

- apple slices (peeled)
- pear slices (peeled)
- peach slices (peeled)
- orange sections
- fresh berries
- cantalope pieces
- bananas

Raw Vegetables:

- carrot sticks (large)
- cauliflower bits
- asparagus tips
- mushroom slices
- green beans
- broccoli tips
- peas

Meats:

- crisp bacon
- frankfurters
- small meatballs
- ham bits
- beef jerky
- ground meat "sticks"
- tuna fish

Breads, Cereals:

- buttered toast, cut in fourths
- pretzels
- bagles and cream cheese
- cold cereals (dry or with milk)
- graham crackers
- whole grain crackers

Dairy:

- cheese bits
- hard-cooked eggs
- cottage cheese (add fruit)
- yogurt (freeze for fun)

Finger plays give adults a fun way of sharing with children. They are helpful for cheering a fretful child. They provide an easy way to introduce new words and repeat old ones to help children learn language. Finger plays help a child name and use different body parts. This helps a child develop a sense of "self." Sometimes caregivers feel uncomfortable playing finger games. This feeling usually disappears once a caregiver learns, practices and then uses a few finger plays with young children. The toddlers in your room may already know a few finger plays. Start with the ones they know and add some new and different finger plays. You'll find new finger plays by reading books, asking other caregivers and making up finger plays of your own.

Here is a simple finger play and directions to help you get started:

HERE'S A BALL

Now here's a ball.
(Make circle with thumb and index finger.)
And here's a ball.
(Make circle by holding thumbs and index fingers of both hands together.)
And here's a ball, I see.
(Make a big circle, raising arms and touching fingertips above your head.)

Shall we count them?
Are you ready?
One.... *(Say each number slowly while repeating*
Two.... *circles with hands.)*
Three....

OPEN, SHUT THEM

Open, shut them.
Open, shut them.
Give a little clap.

Open, shut them.
Open, shut them.
Lay them in your lap.
(Do just what the words say, starting with your hands clenched at about shoulder height.)

MAKE FLANNEL BOARDS

A flannel board is easy to make. All you need is some stiff backing and fabric to cover it. A cardboard carton can form the backing. Cover the backing with felt or flannel. Indoor-outdoor carpet can also be used as a surface for felt cutouts. Felt cutouts will stick to these surfaces. Other cutouts with a small piece of very fine sandpaper glued to the back will stick to flannel boards. A caregiver can use the flannel board with a small group of children. With appropriate cutouts you can illustrate a story, song, poem or finger play. Or you can show and talk about things like animals or fruits. Just remember that group time with toddlers is short. Five to ten minutes will do. A small group of five or six toddlers is about right.

USING A FLANNELBOARD

Plan and prepare ahead to use a flannel board with your toddlers:

With a child alone Use several colors of felt to make shapes. Cut the shapes about two inches across. Make different shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, diamonds, stars and hearts. Also cut out outlines of animals, flowers, trees and houses. Some days put out the shapes. Other days use the outlines. Then a child working alone can move the felt shapes around experimenting with different designs. After the children have played with the outline shapes for a while, add long, narrow strips and shapes such as rectangles and triangles.

With a group Prepare ahead of time to use the flannel board with a small group of toddlers. Decide what song, poem or subject you want to use. Gather or prepare the cutouts you will need. It may help to number the back side of each cutout if you need to use a particular order. Practice so you have the little details of your presentation clear in your own mind. For example, it helps to know ahead of time that your lap is a good place to put unused cutouts.

USE THE SOUNDS OF MUSIC

Music most certainly belongs in the toddlers' environment. Music is first of all fun and a source of joy. Keep that first in your mind. You can also use music to help toddlers learn language, practice skills or develop their memories. For toddlers keep music time simple. Keep groups small. It is no fun to have to force a large group of toddlers to sit still and sing together. Music may happen when a toddler asks you to play a favorite record. It may happen outside. During a free-play period, a caregiver and a few toddlers might sing or dance together. With toddlers music will often just "happen." But always plan to include music with small groups of children. Also have a place where a child or two can listen to records or tapes. Put simple musical instruments where a child can find and experiment with them.

Here are some suggestions for making music a fun part of the toddler's environment:

Use a record player, radio or tape recorder. Play a variety of music - both children's and adults' music, including folk, country, classical, popular and ethnic music. Play records of sounds like heartbeats, trains or animals. Music played all day will be "tuned out." Make your music times special.

Repeat simple songs often. Teach simple songs you can sing again and again with your toddlers. Some examples are "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," "Jingle Bells," and "I'm A Little Tea Pot."

Make up songs. Some of the best songs to use with toddlers are those you make up to go with whatever the children are doing - "Sliding down. sliding down. Down, down the slide." Make up your own melody or chant - saying the words in a rhythmic, singing tone.

Use rhythm instruments. Your center may have instruments like drums and triangles or you can make your own. Coffee tins with plastic lids, round cereal boxes or pots and pans make good drums. Empty cardboard tubes can be hit together. Fill empty bandage tins or film cans with sand, beads or seeds and tape tightly. Toddlers can shake these as they sing or you play a record.

MOVE WITH MUSIC

With toddlers music and movement just naturally go together. Expect and encourage lots of movement with all music activities. A child who learns to feel the beat with his whole body by walking to slow music or running to fast music is discovering the basics of rhythm. This will add to his enjoyment and understanding of music for the rest of his life. The toddlers can move to the music when you sing or play an instrument. A radio, record player or tape recorder can provide music. Movement may be in the form of hand movements, finger games, marching or dancing. Just keep music sessions short and repeat the same accivities often.

Here are some ways to get toddlers moving with music in your room:

Move to music. Sing and play "Ring Around The Rosie" or "Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush." Make up chants to accompany an activity like, "I'm mixing, I'm mixing. I'm mixing the milk."

Creep, crawl, run or walk to music. Pick music with different tempos. Show pictures of animals and your toddlers can pretend to crawl like worms, creep like kittens or run like ponies.

Provide instruments. Rhythm-band instruments are best used by single toddlers during free-play time.

Dance to music. Give toddlers colorful scarves and play a waltz. See what happens. Dance to music you enjoy. Hold a toddler's hand to share the rhythm of the dance. Often toddlers will make up their own dances.

Move hands to music. Young toddlers can sing and play "Pat-A-Cake." Older toddlers can sing, "The Wheels On The Bus Go Round And Round." Change the word *bus* to *car* if they aren't familiar with a bus.

Move fingers to music. Learn finger plays from books or other caregivers or recall games you learned as a child. Remember, it takes practice to move those little fingers with skill. Pick simple ones. Save the more complex finger plays for the older toddlers.

PLAN WAYS TO ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT

Caregivers can help young children develop their bodies and use them in different ways. Attention to physical activity can become a natural part of each day's plan. As all parts of the skin are touched, a child gets a sense of movement. Clothing gets in the way of feeling. So let toddlers wear as little clothing as possible. Every movement activity has value only if it is fun for the child. Lots of praise should follow each new accomplishment. Allow children time for trying new experiences. Provide for repeating and changing familiar activities. You can use familiar objects like balls and hoops to encourage movement. Use large areas so the children can practice running fast. Encourage the children to run on grass, sand or gravel and even and uneven surfaces. Play "follow me" with a child, vary carefully darting about and turning. Use balls of different sizes for rolling, throwing and kicking activities.

Encourage fun movement activities with the simple things at hand:

Adjusting speed while running Use a hoop or an old tricycle tire for this activity. At first roll the hoop and follow it with the child. Soon the child will learn to roll the hoop alone. Add new challenges. The child can follow a marked lined or roll the hoop down a slope.

Jumping high Most toddlers jump down. It is a bit more difficult to learn to jump up. Hold your hand or a toy over the child. A jump *up* is required to touch it.

Jumping over Help the children find objects to jump over. These might include a pillow, a ball or a block.

Controlling movement It is important to be able to move slowly. Plan ways to help toddlers learn how to control their movements. Outdoors let them carry a cup or can of water. They can step through a hoop or go around an object. They can step over a fragile object. They can carry two full glasses in both hands. They can step between two ropes without touching them. Or they can try to hit a target with a bean bag.

USE BOOKS IN A QUIET CORNER

Some toddlers in your care will have more experience and skill with handling books than others. Be prepared to show toddlers how to hold a book and turn the pages one at a time. Remember, a skill that the toddler must learn to understand is that a picture relates to something in real life. Toddlers who have a book corner in their room can "read" books by themselves. But you will need to keep this area clearly defined and separate from the other activities. It helps if you have a special table or cozy corner for books. It is especially important to keep this area neat and orderly so the children will understand how books are to be treated. Use the pictures as a guide when choosing books for toddlers.

Here are some things to look for when choosing books for toddlers:

Look for large, clear and colorful pictures. Look for pictures - photographs or drawings - which are large, clear and colorful. One simple object or idea to a page is best.

Look for realistic drawings or photographs. Pictures should clearly represent real-life objects. Save abstract art and fantasy stories for older children.

Look for pictures that are familiar. The things and objects pictured should be a part of the toddler's real life - people, animals, children and plants. Animals and the sounds they make have a special appeal to toddlers.

Look for books that use repetition. Besides seeing familiar objects, toddlers like to see the same thing each time they turn a page. *The Lazy Dog* by John Hamburger is an example. A dog chasing a ball appears throughout the book.

Look for sturdy books. Take time to teach toddlers how to treat books with care. Look for sturdy books and keep a roll of mending tape handy.

USE BOOKS IN A SMALL GROUP ENVIRONMENT

How many toddlers you can read to and for how long will depend upon several factors, such as the age and experience of the toddlers in your care. Other factors are your experiences and skills with toddlers. A good way to start is to read to just one toddler at a time. This way, you can have lots of physical contact with the child involved. Also, you can ask and answer questions and talk about the pictures. With a small group rely on props like a flannel board or puppets to help keep the interest level high. Repetition, funny words and sound effects are fun for toddlers. In either case, keep reading sessions short. Remember, toddlers like familiar stories so repeat their favorites often. Also, they will want you to read the story exactly the same way each time.

Here are some ways to make group story time successful:

Set the mood. Read books when the children ask or when they are relaxed and calm. You may have a quiet activity or talk to the children calmly to set the mood before reading.

Have a good time. Pick books you and the children like. Think of props to use or ways to talk about the pictures that will be fun for both you and the children.

Plan the setting. Have the children sit as close to you as possible. Make sure every child can see the pictures easily and can touch you or the book.

Keep it short. A short, fun session is the best way to introduce toddlers to books. If you detect boredom or restlessness, "tell the pictures," leaving out some of the words to bring the book to a quick end.

Involve the children. Allow for questions or let the children talk about the story. Point to pictures and ask questions.

SHOW *HOW TO* RATHER THAN *WHAT TO* IN ART

You can have art activities with toddlers. There are a few things to remember so that each child can enjoy success. Use simple, fun activities. You and the parents may enjoy displaying the finished product, but remember for the child it is the experience, the *doing* or *making* that provides most of the fun and feelings of success. Plan for one caregiver to do the art activities with only a small group of toddlers at one time. Continue until every - or nearly every - child who wants to has done the activity. Activities can be done on the floor or at a table. Prepare for the activity, which may be messy, with a drop cloth, aprons for the children, sponges for clean-up and water for washing-up nearby. Be confident that spills are likely to occur and make clean-up a casual, routine part of the activity.

Some basic art supplies you can use:

Paintbrushes Use large, wide brushes for tempera and easel painting and smaller brushes for water colors. Use sponges and strings for a painting change.

Paint Powder tempera is the least expensive paint. You can find good recipes and make your own finger paint. Water colors produce beautiful results for seeing how colors mix. See page 108 for paint and play dough recipes.

Play dough Make your own and change colors or shades of color from time to time.

Crayons Broken crayons with the paper peeled off encourage the toddlers to use the sides as well as the tips.

Paper Since paper is expensive, look for sources of used paper you can recycle - gift wrap, paper bags, computer runouts and office disposals.

Felt tip pens They are expensive but fun and produce bright results.

Paste A simple mixture of flour and water makes a thick, harmless paste for toddlers.

Scissors A few pairs of blunt-end scissors will do for the oldest children in the room.

THINK ABOUT YOUR REACTIONS

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MESSY THINGS?

Think about how you would react if you saw a toddler doing each of the things below. Put a 1 next to the behavior that would be most annoying to you or which you would try to prevent. Put a 2 next to the behaviors that would be acceptable or which you would not try to prevent. When you have finished thinking about how you would react to each situation, go back to those which you rated with a 1 and check the reason that you think most closely explains why you feel the way you do.

You notice a toddler doing the following:

	More work for me	Not good for toddler	Toddler's parents would object
___ tracing a large circle with soap on a mirror by the sink	___	___	___
___ "painting" a moustache on her upper lip with chocolate pudding	___	___	___
___ trailing the sleeves of his shirt across the wet paint on a picture	___	___	___
___ stirring her mashed potatoes round and round her plate with her fingers	___	___	___
___ jumping into a puddle of water on the playground	___	___	___
___ pushing the hair out of his eyes with a hand covered with flour paste	___	___	___
___ wiping a hand covered with finger paint on his pant leg	___	___	___
___ drawing on a tabletop with a felt-tip pen	___	___	___

REMEMBER, BEING CREATIVE ISN'T ALWAYS TIDY

If you are like many grown-ups, you may find yourself avoiding messy activities in the center or correcting toddlers for getting messy. It is interesting to think about your reasons for this. It probably is true that very few messy activities actually are harmful to a toddler. And it is true that most toddlers would choose to do something messy whenever they could. What's going on then, that makes some of us avoid messy play? If you look back over your own reactions to the situations on the last page, you probably will find that the *real* reason for not approving of certain types of messy play is that it creates more work for you as a caregiver. This is an important reason, of course, since caring for a group of toddlers takes a lot of energy. However, some chances for creative, if messy, play should be given to toddlers who are so interested in exploring the possibilities of things in their environment. Another concern which caregivers often have about messy play is that parents will be upset if the child's clothes are messy at the end of the day.

Plan your room to include activities and materials that:

Make clean-up easy. Arrange your room so messy activities happen over hard, easy-to-clean surfaces. Use drop cloths on the floor. Wear washable clothing. Provide aprons for the toddlers. If you use drop cloths, just be sure to secure the edges to avoid tripping. Having clean-up routines carefully planned and sponges, buckets and mops handy, make messy activities seem like less work.

Educate your parents. Your parent handbook can help explain the importance of toddlers appearing in clothing suitable for both messy and active play. Try a special display on a bulletin board for parents to see. Find and display pictures of adults using messy materials, like potters, sculptors and automobile mechanics. Include photos of toddlers in your room painting, digging and playing in water. Use a title like, "Creative Genius At Work." Hopefully, parents will get the message.

USE A THEME TO PULL THINGS TOGETHER

Use a theme whenever you can as you plan activities for the toddlers in your room. A theme may be used for a day, several days or longer. When you use a theme with toddlers, you help make sense out of the different pieces of the day. Once you have an idea for a theme, think about all the ways you can use that theme. Some themes will lend themselves to more activities than others. A theme may develop around a holiday, a season, plants or kinds of transportation. Once you get into the habit of planning and using themes, it will be easy to find more than one activity or way to work around a theme.

Some themes you might use with your toddlers:

Caring for babies Toddlers have a great interest in babies and their care. They like stories about babies, real-life visits from babies and dolls and doll furniture. Beds that are large enough for a toddler to get into promote pretend play. Toddlers will take turns putting each other to sleep.

Animals Pictures of animals and animal sounds, of course, are always interesting to these young children. Toddlers will like to see and talk about pictures of baby animals with their mothers.

Weather Use the weather for a theme inside and outside. On a snowy day show and talk about pictures of snow. Put out white paint and use a dark colored paper. The toddlers can paint "snow" pictures. Make a snowman or snowballs. Bring some snow inside so the toddlers can see what happens as it melts.

Seasons Plan activities to match the changing seasons. In the fall rake leaves and let the toddlers jump into them. Decorate your room with fall leaves and Indian corn for simple art activities.

Holidays You can help toddlers learn about their culture and the culture of others. They can make simple decorations or cards for different occasions. Be careful about using holidays as themes. Avoid too much attention too long in advance of a special holiday. Sometimes children are overly excited by too many activities, too much talk and too many treats.

CHECK YOUR CENTER FOR CREATIVITY AND VARIETY

Use the checklist below to help you look at and think about how creatively you use the environment to help the toddlers in your room. Think about ways to improve the activities and how you present them as you check the items on this list.

____ caregivers use a toddler's question as an opportunity to help children discover new information.

____ the environment includes toys and play structures toddlers can use successfully.

____ toddlers are encouraged to feel good about themselves with ___ mirrors ___ names on artwork displayed in room ___ photos of group at child eye level.

____ visitors are invited regularly to the room.

____ caregivers know and understand special needs of military life-styles.

____ caregivers include books, songs, pictures, food or stories so each child can feel good about his own family and culture.

____ caregivers also introduce books, songs, pictures, food or stories so children learn about different cultures, family styles and sex roles.

____ caregivers, male and female, share all duties and responsibilities equally.

____ caregivers encourage all children to use all toys and activities.

____ caregivers enjoy and encourage pretend play with the children.

____ materials in the room encourage pretend play

___ props ___ housekeeping area ___ free movement ___ puppets

___ toy animals ___ blocks

____ music available in the room

___ regular group time ___ small groups ___ individually ___ radio

___ record player ___ tape recorder

___ rhythmic movement games

___ movement with music ___ movement without music

___ creeping and crawling ___ dancing ___ finger games

(turn page please)

___ books in the environment

  ___ large, clear pictures ___ texture books ___ group story time

  ___ books available at all times for toddlers to look at

___ art and messy materials used

  ___ occasionally ___ regularly

  ___ painting ___ play dough ___ clay ___ collages ___ crayons

  ___ felt-tip pens ___ glue or paste ___ scissors

___ toddlers are able to choose whether or not to participate in an activity

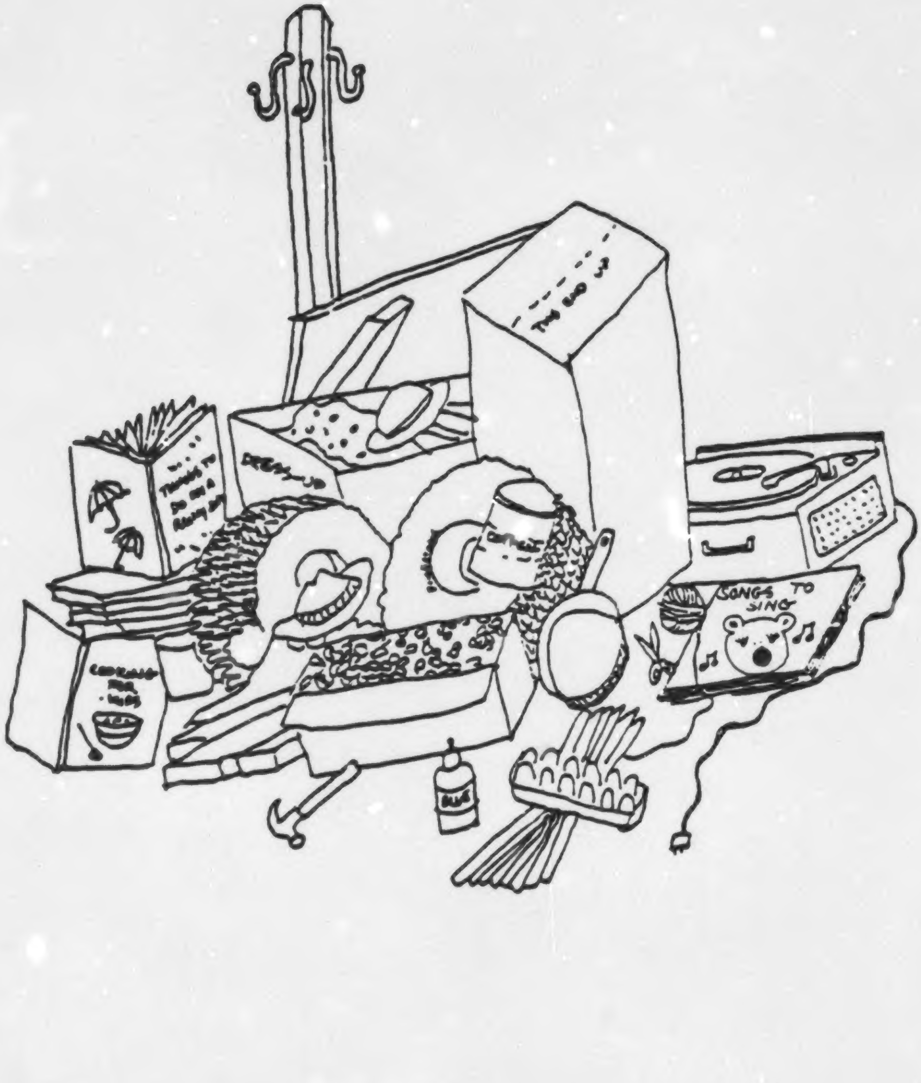
___ caregivers plan activities for different interests and levels of skill

___ caregivers allow some children to spend less time at one activity

___ caregivers write children's names on art "products" and display some in the room

___ caregivers watch for and praise children who express their own ideas in movement, music, art, blocks, pretend play, etc.

FINDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT CAREGIVING


Things to Do on a Rainy Day
DRESS-UP
SONGS TO SING
COOKING FOR KIDS
GLUE

KEEP TRACK OF GOOD IDEAS

Variety and change make your job more interesting and fun. Of course, a child will always enjoy repeating one or more favorites with you. Many caregivers find real value in keeping track of the successful ideas they have found and used. There are different ways to collect these. Some caregivers jot notes on the back of napkins. Some make cards and file them in boxes. Others make their own notebooks. Caregivers also find picture collections helpful. Some caregivers make and use activity cards in their rooms. These cards list activities or ways to use a certain toy.

Here are some suggestions for ways to keep track of your good ideas:

Your own private collection Ideas - even good ones - have a way of slipping away. When you see a good idea that you'd like to remember, write it down and file it for later use. You may choose to write your ideas on index cards and keep them in a recipe file box. Or you may choose to keep a notebook. A three-ring binder allows you to add pages and reorganize as you choose. It helps to file ideas by categories like *movement*, *art*, *finger plays* and *poems*. The advantage of file cards is their convenient size. You can put a card in a pocket. Then you can quickly glance at the words to a new song or finger play.

Picture collections You may want to start your own picture collection. Some caregivers save and share good pictures with others in their center. Large, colorful, simple pictures of animals, vehicles and people give you and the children real things to talk about. Large pictures are best stored flat. A cardboard box with cardboard sheets for section dividers serves this purpose. Pictures which are mounted on cardboard and covered with clear, plastic self-sticking paper can be used again and again. Travel agencies, grocery stores and dairy councils are some sources for pictures.

Activity cards An envelope taped to the wall or a shelf can hold activity cards for an area. Each card can list the materials needed, how to use things or suggest things to say. For example, cards may show different ways to play blocks with toddlers of different ages and skills.

MAKE YOUR OWN PLAY DOUGH AND FINGER PAINT

Most early childhood books have recipes for making play dough, finger paint and other art materials. Try different recipes until you find the ones you like best. The recipe below makes dough which can be used over and over. Just store it in a plastic bag in the refrigerator between uses. We recommend a few drops of oil of cloves. This gives the dough a nice aroma and helps retard the growth of mold. Tempera paint also can be made with or without food coloring. Tempera paint also can be added to play dough for color. With practice you will be able to make a smooth, pliable dough. To keep the dough from sticking, dust the children's hands with a little flour. A simple recipe for finger paint is to use liquid starch. Give the children tempera paint in shakers. They shake on a color and spread it around. Painting directly on table tops can be as much fun as using paper.

Here are two recipes for you to try:

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Finger Paint

1 cup laundry starch	4 cups boiling water
1 cup cold water	1/2 cup soap flakes

Mix starch and cold water. Pour into boiling water and whip with a wire whip. As it cools, whip in 1/2 cup soap flakes. Let the children shake on tempera paint for color.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Play Dough

Mix: 3 cups water, 2-4 teaspoons food coloring, 4 1/2 tablespoons oil, 1 drop of oil of cloves

Mix dry ingredients and stir into water mixture:

6 cups flour
1 1/2 cups salt
3 tablespoons alum power

Add more water if too stiff, more flour if too sticky. Knead. Store in air-tight container in the refrigerator. The children can help make this recipe.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Learning to ask for materials is basic to the art of scrounging. When others learn that you work in a child care center, often they are glad to have you haul away their surplus materials or outdated supplies. Scrap lumber, fabric, packing crates or materials, paint, wallpaper and plants are just a few of the things you might uncover. Remember, local public libraries are good sources for books, records and other materials. Be aware that there probably are sources for surplus or donated materials on the installation where your center is located. Discuss with your director these sources for free materials as outlined in *Installation Resources Available To Military Child Care Programs*, which is part of the director's *Administrative Guidebook*.

Here are some more sources of information to help you learn the art of scrounging:

Beautiful Junk (DHEW Publication No. OHD 76-31036). The project suggestions are mostly for older children, but this tells where to get free and inexpensive materials. The list of sources includes everything from soft-drink companies and carpet shops to parents and suggests some things to ask for from each. Order by name and number from DHEW, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Washington, DC 20201.

Free And Inexpensive Materials For Preschool And Early Childhood, 2nd ed., by Robert Monahan, Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, Inc., 1977. This book lists places to write for free and inexpensive materials and suggests local sources for supplies.

Designing A Day Care Center, by E. Evans, G. Saia, and E. Evans. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974. This is a good book for those who have access to carpentry services or volunteer labor. This book has photographs and plans for shelves, furniture and play units. These can be built to fit your specific needs at a savings.

Pre-School Equipment and *Children's Things*, available from Stone Mountain Projects, Inc., Roaring Brook Farm, Conway, Massachusetts 01341. These are illustrated plan books with price estimates and construction plans.

The toys that toddlers enjoy the most for the longest time are often rather simple. Containers, measuring cups or spoons, funnels or empty boxes make fun toys for these young children. You also can make good toys without spending too much money. You can use household materials or inexpensive items. There are many books available, suggesting ideas for what to use and how to make things for children. One such book is *Play And Playthings For The Preschool Child* by Elizabeth Matterson. New York, New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1967. This paperback book tells how to use common items or natural materials to make toys for young children. Toy and equipment catalogs are helpful. Most describe how a toy is to be used and by what age child. You can get ideas for making toys from these catalogs. Nesting toys, for example, are easy to make. You can cover cans of different sizes with self-sticking paper. You can pick the sizes and number of cans to suit your exact needs.

Here is a partial list of manufacturers who supply catalogs upon request:

Creative Playthings, P. O. Box 1100, Princeton, New Jersey 08540.

Childcraft, 155 E. 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010.

Child Play, 43 East 19th Street, New York, New York 10003.

Developmental Learning Materials, 7440 Natchez Avenue, Niles, Illinois 60648.

Community Playthings, Rifton, New York 12471.

START YOUR OWN COLLECTION OF BOOKS AND RECORDS

You have been given lots of suggestions for planning and managing toddler spaces in *Creating Environments For Toddlers*. As you work with toddlers, you may want more information about how they develop, what they can do and like to do and how to organize space. The list below contains ideas for books and records which may give you new ideas to add to what you have already learned.

A STARTER BOOKSHELF

The Toddler Center: A Practical Guide To Day Care For One- and Two-Year-Olds by Marion O'Brien, et al. Baltimore: University Park Press, 1979.

This is a big, thick book that has tips covering every detail of group care for toddlers from biting to record keeping. It gives lots of information of great value to directors as well as caregivers. This book alone would be a good resource for setting up and operating a toddler center.

Infant And Child In The Culture Of Today, Revised ed., by Arnold Gessell, MD., et al. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974.

The book, based on research at the Gesell Institute of Child Development, covers the child from birth to age five. There are two sections most helpful to toddler caregivers. The book gives detailed behavior profiles for both the two year old and the two-and-a-half year old. In another section it discusses how best to deal with two and two-and-a-half year olds in a group setting.

Developmental Play As A Learning Tool: Curriculum Guide For Infant-Toddler Education Program by Kyong Lischner, et al. Glassboro, New Jersey: Bozorth Early Childhood Demonstration Center, 1975.

This book has delightful illustrations and a relaxed, yet sound approach to using play in the group care setting. The years one to three are divided into six stages. The main behaviors of each stage are listed. Then each subject, such as sleeping, blocks and sound, is discussed as they apply to each stage.

Learning Activities For The Young Preschool Child by Rita Watrin and Paul Hanly Furfey. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1978.

This book gives lots of activities - 170 to be exact. The organization of this book is very helpful. For each activity you are given an appropriate age level, objective, materials list, suggested things to say, some helpful hints and things to do to repeat or expand upon the activity later. This book contains good ideas, but use it with caution. Remember, toddlers learn best when they ask - not when an adult decides it is time to tell or teach.

Daycare For Infants by E. Belle Evans and Georgia E. Saia. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972.

Although most of this book is devoted to planning and operating a daycare center, it has one good chapter devoted to toddler care. The equipment, music and book appendices are very useful.

Stimulating Group Care For Infants And Toddlers by Arlee Vallery. University of Alabama: Division of Continuing Education, 1972.

This is a small pamphlet, but it has good lists of toys, books, music and easy art activities for toddlers. It briefly describes toddler programs and guidance techniques.

The First Three Years Of Life by Burton L. White. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

If you want more developmental information, try this book. It divides the first three years of life into seven phases. Of special interest to the toddler caregiver is phase VII, 24 to 36 months of age. Typical changes in the toddler's body, mind and feelings are discussed. Although this book was written for parents, it has very useful information for caregivers. Even though Burton White does not endorse full time child care for children under three, caregivers who work in child care centers may find his book helpful.

Listen! by Joy Wilt and Terre Watson. Waco, Texas: Creative Resources, 1977.

This is a recipe book for making 60 musical instruments. Groups of toddlers probably could not be involved in making these instruments, but would enjoy using many of these easy-to-make instruments from easy-to-find materials. The book briefly discusses the *why* and *how* to teaching listening skills, also.

Let's Play Outdoors by Katherine Read Baker. Washington, DC: NAEYC, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW, 20009.

This inexpensive pamphlet is worth every penny just to see the photographs of children in a wide variety of outdoor play activities. Although some ideas are more suitable for preschoolers, there are enough ideas for toddler caregivers to use with very young children.

Serving Infants by D. S. Huntington, et al. Washington, DC: DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 72-8.

This publication, part of the DHEW day care and child development series, contains basic information helpful to both caregivers and center directors. It includes some useful lists: information sources on day care and child development; suggested equipment and supplies and toys and books.

Abstracts On Child Play Areas And Child Support Facilities by A. B. Hill and C. G. Lane with V. Cohen, G. T. Moore and T. McGinty. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Architecture and Urban Planning Research, 1979.

This reviews 40 important works in the fields of child development, early childhood education and child environments. A number of specific recommendations are included from each of these sources.

Children Learn Physical Skills, Vol. 1 - Birth To Three Years by Liselott Diem. Washington, DC: AAHPER Publications, 1974.

With delightful photographs of young children in action and simple, step-by-step text, this book describes many easy ways to help children gain self-confidence, creative thinking and coordination using nothing more complicated than trustworthy adults, ordinary furniture, hoops and doorway gym bars.

Finger Plays For Early Childhood by Don Peek. Minneapolis: T. S. Denison and Company, Inc., 1975.

This is a paperbound, inexpensive book which includes many finger plays and suggested hand movements.

RECORDS

Below are some records your toddlers may enjoy. We suggest a few titles to help you get started in making your own selections. Share all kinds of music with your toddlers. Look especially for titles by Ella Jenkins, Pete Seeger, Nancy Raven, Tom Glazer, Hap Palmer, Woodie Guthrie, Burl Ives or Alan Mills. Do not expect toddlers to do complicated dances or follow elaborate directions.

The Feel Of Music. Hap Palmer (Educational Activities, Inc., Freeport, New York 11520). Hap sings and plays about music and suggests different ways to move.

Spin, Spider, Spin. Patty Zeitlin and Marcia Berman (Educational Activities, Inc., AR551). The fun titles on this record include "I Love Lizards" and "Lots Of Worms."

American Folk Songs For Children. Pete Seeger (Folkways FC7601). "This Old Man," "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain," and "Train Is A-Coming" are some of the old favorites sung in a simple, direct style.

Lullabies And Other Children's Songs With Nancy Raven. (Pacific Cascade LPL7007-B). Short songs sung and chanted, including a variety of sounds, rhythms and tempos.

A Long Time. Ella Jenkins with Brother John Sellers and Joseph Brewer. (Folkways FC7754). This is a fine collection of Negro spirituals and rhythmic music.

Saturday Morning Children's Concert. Narrated by Dexter Michael (Golden Records LP219). A variety of themes and moods provides a different kind of listening.

Songs To Grow On. Woodie Guthrie (Folkways FT1502). Also has the title, *Songs To Grow On For Mother And Child.* Nursery Days (Folkways FC7675). Guthrie sings 12 of his chants in a simple, honest way.

The Feel Of Music. Hap Palmer (Educational Activities, Inc.). Hap Palmer uses good rhythms and a variety of tempos. Let toddlers listen and move as they choose.

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